





THE

LANGUAGE

OF

REASON.

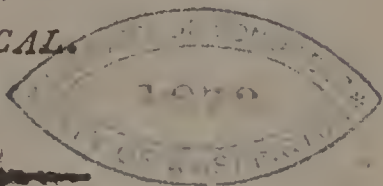
BY THE

MARQUIS CARRACCIOLI, *Lou. Carraccioli*

TO WHICH IS AFFIXED,

AN

EXTRACT FROM THE THOUGHTS OF
MONS. PASCAL.



TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH
BY THE REV. J. B.

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T O
H I S G R A C E
T H E
D U K E O F L E I N S T E R .

A WORK dictated by Reason, and whose main object is to instil into the tender minds of youth the early sentiments of virtue, to open their dawning Intellect to the light of Truth, to present to them, in a clear and interesting view, all their religious, moral and social duties ; a Work, in fine, that tends to render Virtue amiable and its practice easy, by exhibiting in a most pleasing light the *beauty and grandeur of Religion*, naturally claims for its Patron and Protector, a NOBLEMAN, still more conspicuous for his virtues, than his noble birth or titles of distinction, whose great mind is
superior

DEDICATION.

superior to the gaudy display of worldly pomp and pageantry, whose gentle and affable manners bespeak the innate nobility of his soul, and who possesses in an eminent degree, the rare qualities of illustrious Ancestry, a sound Understanding and the best of Hearts, in a word, *the Friend of his Country and of Mankind.*

That your GRACE may live long to enjoy the comforts of domestic happiness, amidst an amiable and affectionate family and a grateful tenantry, who flourish under your Grace's patriarchal protection ; may you long continue to shed the benign influence of your virtues on your native land, and to exhibit to our Nobility an Example of true Dignity blended with mildness and humanity, is the sincere and fervent wish of

Your GRACE's most devoted

and humble Servant,

J. B.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THANKS to that all-ruling Providence, whose ways are inscrutable but ever just, who, in his adorable wisdom, thought fit to expose me to the scourge of persecution and imprisonment, in order to teach me those bitter but salutary lessons, which are only to be learned in the school of Adversity; and who has been graciously pleased to rescue me from so many hidden Snares: to Him be for ever, Glory, Praise and Benediction. And to those true and generous Friends, who stepped forward unsolicited, to assist me in the time of need and to extricate me from my difficulties, I beg leave to return, with heart-felt gratitude, my most sincere acknowledgments.

Far be it from me to censure or condemn, much less to resent the conduct of those, who have been instrumental in procuring me the inestimable advantages of Meditation and Solitude.

O Holy Solitude! what unspeakable Blessings dost thou confer on Man! did he but know how to profit of thy favours: It is thou alone who canst recall us to ourselves, and to our God, and canst fit us to converse with him. Thou fixest the inconstancy of the wandering mind, distracted by the noise and bustle of a giddy World, and teachest us to despise all its false Allurements and fleeting Vanities. Thou alone canst still the tumult of the jarring passions; give energy and elevation to the Soul, to spurn all mean and groveling thoughts; to soar into the region of Spirits, and dwell in silent contemplation on the infinite and adorable Perfections of that *Beauty ever Ancient and ever New*: And as the Stag panteth after the streams of running water, so, assisted by Thee, we aspire to that inexhaustible Source of Happiness, which alone can satisfy the

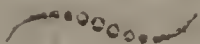
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insatiable thirst of a Heart created for the enjoyment of God himself, or as St. Augustine thus beautifully expresses it,—“ My Heart, O Lord ; hath been restless, ’till it hath rested in thee.”

I think it is but justice to acknowledge, that I am indebted for my acquaintance with this excellent Work of the Marquis Carraccioli to a valuable Friend and Companion in my confinement, a Person highly estimable for his solid piety, improved abilities and modest worth ; and to his late amiable and accomplished Consort, whom the Lord and Sovereign Disposer of life and death was pleased to call to himself, after having tried her like gold in the crucible of adversity. With grateful remembrance of her cordial and affectionate attention to me, during five months imprisonment, I here offer to her revered memory the just tribute of my most sincere regret ; never can I forget how often her friendly visits and cheering presence dispelled the gloom of my *Prison*, and what comfort and satisfaction I have received from her rational and edifying conversation. At their instance, therefore, I ventured to undertake the translation of the present Work, conceiving with them, that it would meet with a favourable reception, at least, from the well disposed part of the community, and might serve as an antidote against the infection of those dangerous and pernicious writings, which are equally subversive of Religion and Morality : I confidently hope, as this has been my first attempt of the kind, that an indulgent Public, in consideration of my earnest wish to serve them, will make allowance for some inaccuracies of stile or other imperfections they may discover in it. With respect to the Translation, all I shall say is that, in scrupulously adhering to the sense of the Author, I have endeavoured, at the same time, by a due discrimination of the Idioms of both Languages, to give it the appearance of an English Original.

J. B.

P R E F A C E.



THE rational and unbiassed Reader will, I doubt not, approve and relish the morality contained in this Essay, whilst such as are actuated merely by passion and prejudice, may affect to despise it, but their contempt should rather excite pity than resentment.

Those who are only to be pleased with brilliancy of style, with paradoxes and new-fangled systems, in opposition to the received opinions of the most virtuous and enlightened men of all ages, will not be inclined to bestow much of their time in perusing these sheets. Reason is simple in her mode of expression, because her language is not that of the Imagination.

The

PREFACE.

The subject of this Book may, perhaps, appear too copious to be confined within so narrow a compass, but should it be found to comprise all the duties of Man with relation to God, to his Neighbour and to Himself, it must be acknowledged, that it announces no more than it contains.

The affectation of those pretenders to fine wit, in boasting continually of the strength of Reason, is what suggested the idea of this Work. Without the aid of Metaphysics or profound dissertations, I trust I shall be able to prove, that no one can be truly rational, who is not a Christian. Such a manner of writing will no doubt excite the contemptuous sneer and ridicule of Freethinkers, but what does Rallery avail in opposition to Truth.

The

The want of serious reflection, and the seduction of a false and sophistical mode of reasoning obscures the understanding and prevents it from discovering and following the true light of Reason : some would wish to subject Reason to the change of fashions ; but though her voice is no longer heard, she always speaks the same language ; ever constant and uniform, her sole object and employment is to enlighten and instruct the Mind.

In thus extolling Reason, the Author does not mean to raise her above herself ; he knows she has her limits ; but he is far from attributing to her our errors. Her language is the language of truth, and we go astray merely because we do not attend to it.

Reason ! thou precious and inestimable Gift of Heaven ! the Ornament, the Essence and distinguishing Characteristic of human nature ;

PREFACE.

nature ; resume now thy rights ; tell the Unbeliever, he outrages and insults thee when he pretends to avenge thy cause, and that thy noblest prerogative is to yield to the superior light of Faith. Never was thy authority more frequently cited, never were there more appeals to thy tribunal, yet notwithstanding this exterior homage, never hast thou been less revered, nor thy Dictates less respected.

Ye who deign to read this Book, will you consider it as a mere pastime, or rather will you not endeavour to profit by it, and become henceforth more attentive to the voice of Reason : she has been speaking to you since the age of seven, and perhaps in vain ; of that you are the best judge ; but if so, how many Tears have you mispent ! how pungent ought to be your Regret !

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THE
Language of Reason.

CHAPTER I.

ON REASON.

WERE I to follow the plan of some modern writers, I should begin by defining Reason, and inventing some new expression to characterise it; but this mode of definitions, which are generally but the mere offspring of the imagination or of prejudice, varies according to the difference of opinion, and serves only to gratify curiosity, still leaving the same void in the mind. It is but too common with the authors of the day, to confine themselves to the surface of things, without producing any thing real or substantial in their works: man requires some solid truth, to bring

him to a due sense of himself, to recal him from a life of dissipation, to awake him from his lethargy, and to point out to him his origin and his destiny.

However, not to evade the difficulty, we shall briefly consider reason as *a just way of thinking, and of combining our thoughts*, and that which essentially distinguishes man from the brute creation which is guided by a certain impulse, called *instinct*. The soul, by a constant and regular operation, collects together its several ideas, and of these ideas combined, forms its judgment and determines in consequence. What would the world be if deprived of the faculty of reasoning? “the earth, according to the remark of the celebrated author of nature displayed, would be entirely blind and would have no need of the light of the sun : but being endowed with reason, which is, as it were, the centre of God’s works, and harmonises all, we discover throughout an intelligent being, an unity and just relation of things to each other ;
and

and man combining all those different species of beings, forms a whole of so many separate parts ;” “ the animals, which have only their instinct to direct them, (continues the same author), know not who cloaths or feeds them ; neither do the stars know whence they derive their splendor, reason alone both feels and comprehends it. Placed between God and irrational creatures, the obligation of thanksgiving, of love and gratitude on the part of all created beings, devolves upon her alone. Without Reason, all nature would be mute, but through her, all things that exist proclaim the glory of their author.” Were Reason to be silent or banished from the world, nothing would be heard but the bellowing of the passions ; and the cries of men, confounded with the howling of beasts, would express nothing but disorder and stupidity. It is the voice of Reason that has dictated laws, inspired knowledge and a taste for letters, and first persuaded mankind to live in society. ’Tis Reason that has announced the

wonders of an all powerful Being, has convinced us of the truth of Revelation, incessantly recalls us to ourselves and to God, exhorts us to the love of virtue, and invites us to taste the sweets of Christian Philosophy. Whatever is contrary to Reason tends only to disturb and disorganise the universe.

Reason is seldom found to be the companion of too quick and lively an imagination. The transient blaze of artificial fireworks may excite our wonder and admiration for a moment, whilst the ordinary fire that burns in our grates, may be applied to a thousand different uses, either to administer to the wants or comforts of life. Reason, surely, is not the production of climate or of education, as has been boldly advanced by certain extravagant writers in the paroxysm of their folly; yet, we must acknowledge that, the temperature of the air, as also the cultivation of the mind, greatly contribute to enlarge or confine the progress of the judgment.

Man's

Man's Reason may be compared to his eyes, which though of themselves perfectly organized, and capable of performing their functions, yet can only see in proportion to the light transmitted to them. Thus the savage possesses the faculty of thinking as well as we do, and if he does not make the same use of it, 'tis because ignorance and the want of cultivation are, as it were, clouds that obstruct his intellectual view.

In vain, however, would we attempt to suppress this interior voice, which is the organ of God himself, still would it break forth amidst the tumult of passions and prejudice, and cry out that man was created to reflect, to merit, and to aspire to the first principle of being. Reason would be no better than mere instinct, if at the close of life, it did not open to our view that immense career which is suited to the capacity of the soul, and to all its intellectual powers. This is the grand perspective we should keep continually before us, and which
should

should inspire us with a desire of being freed from these wretched trammels that confine us to this earthly prison. Man, though possessed of all the strength and beauty of the most sublime and comprehensive genius, is but a lisping infant should he loose sight of that prospect of eternity which God himself has pointed out to us.

The names of Plato, Socrates, and Aristotle, are justly revered by posterity for their endeavours to dispel those clouds of ignorance and superstition, in which the pagan world was enveloped, and for having discovered by the force of natural Reason, a glimpse of that eternal source of light, of which the sun in its meridian glory is not even a shadow. But who could have imagined that the same darkness which seemed to have disappeared for ever, was to return with still blacker shades to overspread our horizon? Reason, though now illuminated by the light of revelation, can with difficulty maintain her rights, and that
only

only among a few sages, whom the libertine and free-thinker would fain represent as enthusiasts or fools. Man labours to annihilate his immortal soul, to bring himself on a level with the brute, and dares even to express his astonishment that any doubt or remorse should arise in the mind at the consideration of so horrible a metamorphose : nay even any attempt to recall men to God, the author of our life and being, is stigmatized as fanaticism ! but how vain and impotent are these efforts of impiety ! the image of God in the soul, can never be entirely defaced, the voice of truth will still be heard amidst the confused clamour of the passions.

If we listen to Reason, she will inform us that we received our being in a miraculous manner, without having been able either to foresee or determine the instant of our existence ; that tracing back from generation to generation, we must ascend to a first man who could not have made himself, and therefore necessarily

necessarily

necessarily supposes an eternal, immense,
 and omnipotent artist, whose will creates,
 extends and multiplies all as he pleases ;
 Reason will teach us that thought, which
 is purely spiritual and of a very different
 substance from the lymph or the blood
 that circulates through our veins, can
 waft itself in an instant beyond this
 universe, without any other vehicle than
 that of the memory and the imagination ;
 we learn from Reason that, the heart of
 man, prompted by its insatiable desires
 is involuntarily impelled, even without
 knowing it, to seek God its only sove-
 reign good, the centre of all that moves
 or breathes ; Reason will tell us that,
 being thrown into this world for a few
 years, or perhaps only for a few days,
 the chief business of our life should be
 to merit that immense weight of glory
 which is promised to the practice of vir-
 tue ; it will also tell us that, human na-
 ture is dignified and exalted only by the
 exercise of meekness and patience, and
 by acts of generosity and charity ; that
 the sage who is content to reside within
 himself,

himself, is infinitely more happy and more truly great than the ambitious man who seeks only his aggrandisement, and wearies himself in the pursuit of vanity and falsehood. We discover by Reason that as truth is an object, which is universally sought after and esteemed, it must necessarily exist, and is no where to be found, with certainty, but in the bosom of christianity, in that religion which alone is truly sublime, holy and consistent ; in fine, Reason will convince us that we act as men only when we honour God, and that the true way to honour him, is to pay him that homage and that particular worship which he himself has prescribed.

Such is the Language of Reason, would we but attend to it, instead of listening to the suggestions of flesh and blood : for alas ! the body, gross and material as it is, has nevertheless its own manner of expressing itself ; it is by its seducing voice that, so many are persuaded to give a loose rein to their
B 5
passions

passions and indulge themselves in dangerous and criminal enjoyments ; it is this body which, raising itself on the ruins of the soul, endeavours to intoxicate it with the pleasures of the senses, and divert its attention from those of Reason ; it whispers in the ears of worldlings that it alone is their only end and happiness, and that after its dissolution, there will be an end to their existence ; it holds out to their view all the false allurements of riches and honors, all the splendid pomp and pageantry of worldly grandeur, inspiring at the same time the most frightful ideas of indigence and even of mediocrity. Thus the voice of Reason, continually opposed by the murmurings and revolt of the body, is heard only by those who are courageous enough to brave the tyranny of fashion and to resist the seduction of the passions : 'tis for this reason the gospel recommends the mortification of the body, and tells us that we are not to fear those that can destroy it ; 'tis for the same reason the apostle informs us that

he

he chastised his body and reduced it to subjection.

The false and pernicious system of materialism would never have gained so much credit in the world, were it not so ably supported by this portion of ourselves which is continually tormenting us with its wants. Men accustomed to feel rather than to perceive, may easily be led to believe themselves entirely terrestrial, unless they endeavour by an effort worthy an immortal soul, to shake off the dust that surrounds them, and soar into the sublime region of thought. There is in the interior of our Reason, a sanctuary where God resides, and communicates himself to us in a wonderful manner: those inspirations which we neglect, those queams of conscience which we endeavour to smother, that desire of happiness which is insatiable, are the voice of God speaking within us; they convey to us his divine decrees and that immutable order of his law, which commands us to know and to
spiritualise

spiritual life ourselves. This is neither the effort of enthusiasm, nor the effect of quietism, but the work of an immortal soul conscious of its own dignity, and disengaging itself from all earthly ties in order to ascend to its primitive source : thus the silk-worm divesting itself of its insensible and shapeless mass takes wings and flies ; thus the water of the sea after having been beaten by the tempest, becomes more pure and limped.

Did we but rightly conceive all the value of the operations of Reason, were we persuaded that as often as she speaks to us, she is the interpreter of the most high, we would be more attentive to listen to her and obey her, we would consider ourselves as the representatives of the Deity on earth. Is it not by this glorious privilege of Reason that man is qualified to govern this universe, is capable of knowing his Creator, and of knowing himself, of discerning good from evil, of perceiving, calculating, combining, and feeling that ardent, that insatiable

insatiable desire, which is the pledge of his immortality. Man, then, never can abuse his Reason but he degrades himself; hence it is that he who acts most foolishly would feel resentment at being treated as an idiot or one destitute of Reason.

Nevertheless the errors of the mind, as well as of the heart, so common among mankind, proceed merely from the abuse of Reason. Man almost from his birth is involved in a cloud of prejudices through which he discovers only a false glimmering which he mistakes for the true light of Reason. The Egyptians notwithstanding their many and sublime acquirements of knowledge, framed to themselves as many Gods as they had plants or roots in their gardens. He who has bestowed on us this precious gift, will not suffer us with impunity to abuse or despise it: he requires that we should be ever docile and attentive to the admonitions of Reason, the more so, as all the advice we could receive
from

from others, would avail nothing, unless we listen to what she suggests to each of us in particular. For being created for us, and continually residing in us, she always speaks to us in a manner that is best suited to our character, our talents, our capacity and our duties. There is nothing in the universe has so direct and intimate relations with our propensities and our wants as our own Reason. But in order to be better convinced of this truth, let us, in taking a review of our different obligations, endeavour to see what Reason recommends to each of us for the due discharge of them. Although Reason is one and the same in all countries and in all times, yet, in order the more effectually to gain her ends, she uses different ways of expressing herself according to the different persons, without constraining in any manner our liberty ; to some she speaks more faintly, to others more strongly, making herself all to all ; but it is still the same language, that is, the language of truth.

C H A P II.

ON OUR OBLIGATIONS TOWARDS GOD.

AT the mention of the name of God, all the powers of the soul are awakened; struck with a reverential awe and astonishment that no tongue can express, we make an effort to conceive that immense and unfathomable intelligence, to represent to ourselves that substance which has neither body nor colour, to approach that power and majesty which is utterly inaccessible. What infinite perfections! what wonders! what greatness! the vast ocean is but as a drop of water in comparison to him, the whole earth but as a grain of sand, the sun but a feeble spark, and all the generations of men are in his sight as if they never had been. He wills, and all things spring forth from nothing; he speaks, and

and all return to their original dust: he dwells in the depths of the abyfs, as well as in the heights of Heaven; and though he is nothing of what presents itself to our view, he is every where present, animating all. The rocks, the winds, the sea, and all the elements hear him and obey his commands: first principle and beginning of all things, he himself had no beginning; he shakes the earth to its foundations, whilst he remains immovable; he changes the face of the universe, and still continues immutable: it was he who in our mother's womb, arranged our muscles and organised our frame in such mysterious secrecy, and it is he who will re-animate us hereafter in the darkness of the tomb. It is he dispenses sickness and health, afflicts and cures as he pleases; by the snapping of a single fibre, he levels the strongest man, and overthrows his vast projects. The most diminutive insect bears the impression of his greatness, as well as the elephant, every pulsation of their hearts renders homage to his power and goodness.

goodness. But what are all our expressions but vague terms, unless this great Being himself deign to enlighten our darkness and to stoop to our weakness, alas ! were it not for his commiserating pity we would not blush at prostituting our incense to the flowers that fade, to the Stars that are eclipsed, to animals that neither conceive nor comprehend ; in fine we would stray from ourselves to seek at a distance that God who resides within us and who is our principle and our life. Such is the stupidity of the Atheist and the extravagant folly of the Libertine ; hurried away by the impetuosity of a perverted mind and a corrupted heart, they disown that infinite power, that animates them ; they know not that it is he who unties their tongues, and gives motion to their fingers, even when they write or speak against him. But leaving these senseless men who, in the corruption of their hearts, have said—there is no God, let us consult our own Reason : already it begins to inform me that, it did not
always

always exist, that its thoughts which spring from its perceptions, have some other principle different from itself, that all its faculties are borrowed, that in fine, a Being who is wholly distinct from her, still operates in her, after an ineffable manner, this first dawn of light is sufficient to discover to her her own weakness, and to conduct her insensibly to those great truths, which Religion holds out to our view.

We immediately feel the necessity of a revelation, and this is to be found only in the Christian Religion, which traces its origin to the terrestrial Paradise: that memorable place, tho' the theatre of our woe, gave birth to the worship which we profess; it was there our first parents stripped, by their own fault, of all their glorious prerogatives, and of all their happiness, saw no remedy for their misfortune, but through the mediation of that Messias, who came to instruct and heal us; the authenticity of those Books that have transmitted to us
this

this truth, is so incontestible in the eyes of reason, that we must absolutely renounce or extinguish its light, if after a dispassionate and due examination of the irrefragable proofs upon which they are founded, we do not acknowledge the august authority of the Prophets and the Evangelists.

Man convinced, by his reason, of the evidence of these proofs, acknowledges himself bound to the Deity by the ties of justice and gratitude; he discovers in himself and in all around him, the most powerful motives to attach him to God, and to induce him to honour him by that worship, which he himself has prescribed. In vain, do the passions and senses attempt to revolt, and suggest doubts; the soul thinks, combines and reflects, and remains the more firmly persuaded that, it is by faith alone, a Being who is wholly incomprehensible can and ought to be adored; thus we are guided by the purest light of reason to admire and adore the inscrutable

able

ble Majesty of God in humble silence ; and the more so as all the arguments and disputes of those who reject revelation, end only in a chaos of doubts and uncertainty. What have we learned from all those philosophers, who would listen to nothing but the suggestions of their pride? Some would fain associate us with, and reduce us to the level of the most unclean and ferocious Brutes ; others have considered us as portions of that blind and fantastical Divinity, which they supposed to be diffused through all matter. Infatuated men ! who did not reflect that it is perfectly consistent with reason, to believe things that we cannot comprehend ; whereas the nature of God infinitely surpasses all our conceptions ; to pretend therefore to comprehend him would be an argument of arrogance and folly ; it is not, then, reason, but the abuse of reason, that gives birth to sophisms and absurdities. Reason, ever uniform and consistent, teaches us that it is more glorious to stop where God has fixed the limit for us, than to stray
into

into that frightful void, where pride and presumption are bewildered and lost; the obligation of our duties to God, is of such a nature, that unless we become deaf to the voice of conscience, we cannot dispense with it: but mankind for the most part, are so absorbed in their senses, or so dissipated by their passions, that they attend neither to inspirations, nor to the stings of conscience: they live as if their life solely depended on their own will; they desire, as if their only business here below was to satisfy all their inordinate desires, they seem to forget that God has an absolute right over all their thoughts and affections, that we owe to him the entire homage of our understanding and our will, and that the glorious privilege of possessing an immortal Soul, should remind us every moment we breathe, that we exist only by him and for him; and yet can man reflect on himself and not acknowledge his total dependance and his nothingness? God as the Sun, and man as the shadow seem to move
with

with equal pace : but is it not the light that does all, and embodies even the shadow ? Our Reason has neither justness nor precision, but in as much as it emanates from the creative spirit, that preserves and animates us : it is in God alone we can discover the centre and plenitude of all truth, the science of numbers ; this subject has been ably handled by St. Augustine. If we look also to colours and to the other different objects of our senses, we perceive a wonderful harmony which is neither fictitious nor arbitrary, but admirably calculated to captivate and enchant us. Thus the soul is continually reminded of the influence of an infinite and almighty power, and is wrapt in the silent contemplation of its various and stupendous operations.

We may learn from Reason, that, as this world was not made to constitute our happiness nor our end, we ought to endeavour, by a pure life, to ensure our eternal felicity. All our obligations
towards

towards God may be reduced to our love of him ; Reason proclaims aloud, that it would be the most horrible of crimes to forget him who has done all in us, and has done all for us, and who, in the end, is to be our eternal reward ; and as he has endowed us with a soul capable of loving, we should entertain no affection to any created being, but in reference to him. Was it necessary, then, O my God, exclaims St. Augustine, to oblige us, by an express commandment, to love thee ! When all nature cries out, that thou alone art worthy of our love. Surely we cannot but be sensible that a God who is ever ready to pardon our faults, a God who opens for us the bosom of the Earth, and has spread out the Heavens for our use, a God who is subject to no change or vicissitude, has a just claim to our affection, and that it would be the most crying injustice to refuse him the tribute of our love, whilst we presume to usurp a dominion over the hearts of his creatures.

This divine love must not remain barren and inactive; the Almighty styles himself a jealous God, he requires that our mind should be employed in contemplating his wonders, that our heart should be enflamed with the love of his law, that our hands should be raised up to Heaven, that our feet should be swift in the ways of justice; that, in fine, our whole being should be devoted to his service and to the accomplishment of his designs. St. Thomas, when yet a child, begged of every one he met to teach him what God was, that he might love him still more, so also he declares that we sin grievously, if we fail to adore God as soon as we attain the use of Reason.

It is certain that we owe to that supreme Being who supports and preserves us a constant return of gratitude and love, and that we should be guilty of strange prevarication, were we to begin the day without a grateful acknowledgment of all his blessings and an humble offering

offering of our most fervent prayers and supplications to our Creator and benefactor. Is it not he who formed the day and the night for our use? Who closes and opens our eye-lids? Who continually watches over us when awake, or when buried in sleep? We should frequently call to our recollection those powerful helps by which he has rescued us from so many imminent dangers; as often as the thunderbolt has been suspended over our heads, or the abysses closed beneath our feet, we should reflect with heart-felt gratitude that it was his beneficent hand that protected us. We have seen some fall on our right, and others on our left, whilst we have remained unhurt in the midst of precipices and ruins. But what need is there to resort to those striking examples, in order to remind us of our obligations to God? is it not in him and by him, according to the emphatic expression of the great apostle that, we live, we move, and we exist? Were he to cease but one instant to preserve us, we should soon be

reduced to our original dust and lie confounded with the earth on which we tread. Yet, alas ! how many unhappy people pass their whole lives in a total oblivion of God. Confirmed in their unaccountable stupidity, they have eyes and see not, they have ears and hear not ; they imagine themselves at an infinite distance from that Deity who is continually about them and supplies them with life and action. Who could suspect that such folly and blindness could be found in the midst of christianity, in a religion truly divine, and which so powerfully assists our Reason to trace out all our duties, and inspires us at the same time with force to practise them ? She has not only taught us the means of honouring God, but has also determined the stated times of paying him our most solemn homage. Thus she has appointed the Sundays and great Festivals of the year to be particularly consecrated to the service of God ; though by many, who pretend to the name of christians, they are scarcely distinguished from the other days

days of the week, except by their employing them in idle and prophane amusements.

The sincere Christian whose mind is impressed with a due sense of his obligations to the Supreme Being, will never fail to sanctify the Sunday and other holy-days by works of piety and charity and by his assiduity and attention to divine service. To the shame of Catholics be it mentioned that in the Protestant City of Geneva, the Lord's day is observed with a solemn and religious silence,* uninterrupted by playing or dancing or the sound of instruments, or by any worldly business; how different is the conduct of too many Catholics who imagine that hearing a Mass in a hurry and passing half an hour in a Chapel, where they go perhaps only to see and to be seen, acquits them of all their obligations to God.

Here perhaps some modern wit, assuming the pompous title of Philosopher,

may start up and tell us, that we ought not to confound reason with revelation, that they are entirely different and incompatible with each other. But, though these trite objections have been already sufficiently refuted, it is an incontestable truth that, even the mysteries of the Christian Religion, however incomprehensible in themselves, have nevertheless a luminous side which the eye of reason can discover ; for instance the mystery of the Trinity, which seems the most repugnant to our understanding, will not appear so extraordinary, when represented as it really is. Ignorance and impiety affect to confound the term of person with that of God : and will not seem to understand that, in the mystery of the Trinity, we are taught to believe that one God is no more than one God, and that three persons are really three persons, but they would fain explain it as if three persons constituted but one person ; which undoubtedly would be a thing impossible.

How deplorable is the infatuation of men, when they wilfully shut their eyes against reason ! how many will you find among the followers of Spinoza's system, who give a body to the Deity and represent him as a Soul incorporated with this whole universe ; though you could never prevail on them to admit the union of the divine word with our humanity in the mystery of the Incarnation ! Materialists deny the possibility of a Spiritual Soul acting upon matter, whilst they acknowledge that God, who is a pure spirit, communicates motion to the earth and to the spheres : hence it is clearly proved that, when we stray from God and from his Religion, we are deaf to the voice of reason ; and that all our errors proceed from dissipation and folly. We have allowed our passions and our senses to gain such an ascendancy over us, that we are entirely subject to their control : their seduction is so powerful and so congenial to our corrupt nature, that we feel no inclination to oppose it. After having
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been for a considerable part of our life, stunned with the confused noise and tumult of a vain world, which is swayed only by fashion and prejudice, we bring ourselves at length to consider Reason itself as folly.

Tell that rich man that, in distributing these large sums from a motive of mere ostentation and vanity, he does not comply with the duties of christian charity, that, at most, they are but dead works; he will not understand you. Tell that great man, he degrades humanity, when he speaks with haughtiness or looks down with disdain on even the lowest of mankind; he will despise your reflections. Tell that lady of fashion, that this excessive luxury, these airs of vanity, these fictitious ornaments are contrary to the spirit of the Gospel; her reply will be, that she must support her rank. Tell that infatuated gambler that his money and his time are not to be disposed of according to his caprice, that the law of God has determined the use
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he ought to make of them ; he will laugh at you. Tell those ecclesiastics who aspire to preferment in the church, that the plurality of benefices may prove the cause of their eternal ruin, that it is criminal to solicit livings which have the care of souls annexed to them ; they will consider you as an idiot. Thus it happens that persons in every rank of life, by stifling the voice of Reason, and attending only to passion and prejudice, are hurried away by the torrent ; and the succession of generations is but a succession of errors.

Man should recollect that his obligations towards God are what distinguish him from the brute creation ; for even the brute has its senses and its passions and seems susceptible, like us, of gratitude and affection : to man, as a Poet expresses it, God has given a head and eyes erect to view the heavens, whilst the other animals are bent downwards to the earth. Ah ! if we would but consider how many endearing ties we
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have to attach us to God ; how many pressing motives to induce us to serve him, and to love him ; our whole being, with all its motions, thoughts, sensations, and sentiments, would have but one action and one will, to act only for God and in God. All that is in us or out of us, is defective, as soon as we attempt to withdraw ourselves from him, who vivifies and preserves us. How deplorable then must be the error of those, who never invoke nor mention the name of God, unless to profane it by their blasphemies ! this refined and corrupt age in which we live, has carried extravagance or rather impiety to such a pitch as to invent different terms equally unintelligible and absurd, such as *nature* and *chance*, in order to avoid mentioning the name of God. Away with this philosophical pride and affectation ; and let all that is in us, according to the expression of the prophet, bless the Lord : he heals our infirmities, he pardons our iniquities, he snatches us from the jaws of death, he crowns us in his mercy, he prevents
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our desires, he renews our youth like that of the eagle, he has for us the same tenderness the most affectionate parent has for his child, he knows our weakness, he showers down his blessings from generation to generation, on those that fear him ; he has prepared for us an abode in Heaven, and his kingdom shall have no end. When he laid the foundations of the earth, he had us in view ; and when he renewed the world by the incarnation of his eternal word, he placed us in the way of salvation.

If these be not sufficient motives to excite in us the most lively sentiments of love and gratitude, we are no better than vegetating beings, who have lost the use of Reason. The day will come, and is not far distant, when this universe will disappear as a shadow, together with all its vain amusements and occupations, and nothing will then remain for the soul but the contemplation of God: then we shall be fully convinced,

but perhaps too late, of the obligation and necessity of having studied his law and practised it. The royal Prophet made this his delight, as appears from those admirable psalms he has bequeathed us, and which we would undoubtedly prefer to all other works of poetry, if we had a sincere love of truth : they move, they persuade, they ravish the heart, they are the expression of gratitude and love itself.

Being of Beings ! who hast formed me, and hast led me forth from my mother's womb, who hast opened mine eyes to the light, who hast reckoned the number of the hairs of my head, and the drops of blood that circulate through my frame ; who knowest the inmost recesses of my heart, who scankest all my thoughts, my desires, my projects, and even my dreams. Thou who suppliest strength to my memory, light to my understanding, and expansion to my heart ; who chearest my soul with hope, and heapest
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on me thy choicest blessings, and who now givest motion to these fingers ; it is thou, my Reason acknowledges as her God and supreme author and ruler of the universe ; it is thee she invokes as her only resource, her light, her support, her consolation, and her joy. My Reason which appeared at first as a spark of light in the midst of darkness, when thou wast pleased to unite my soul with my body, is now become a star that pursues its vast career, following thee as its sun, and borrowing from thee its brightness.

To thee, then, O my God, I am indebted for all that I am, and for all that I can do ; ever in the midst of me, thou art continually instructing my Reason, how to act, and how to speak. Yes, my God, it is thou, for thou alone art all powerful, who intimatest to her thy will, and were not our passions so unruly, and our senses so intractable, we might learn from Reason the extent of our obligations

obligations towards thee, she would teach us that at the sole mention of thy adorable name, all the energy of the soul should break forth in praises and thanksgiving, and should melt away in thy presence as wax before the fire. The ostrich in the wilderness invokes thee with her cries ; the roarings of the lion sound forth thy praise, and all the beasts of the forest render homage to thy majesty ; even the little ant by its movements and its industry announces all thy greatness, and man by his Reason acknowledges thy supreme dominion, and confesses thee the God thrice holy and sovereign lord of all. Let us learn then to respect this most precious and inestimable gift of God, since it is by its ministry we hold a superiority and empire over the rest of the creation, and are enabled to ascend even to the throne of God himself. Methinks I see this glorious faculty, like the sun amidst the planets communicating light to our actions and our desires. Without it we could have no idea of God : and what is
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a being incapable of knowing God? Without it we would be ignorant of the existence of religion, and the submission we owe to the infallible authority of the holy catholic and apostolic church: in fine, without it we would neither think of living well nor of dying well.

CHAPTER III.

ON OUR OBLIGATIONS TOWARDS OURSELVES.

IN order to know the extent of our duties towards ourselves in particular, we must enter into our heart, where we feel that man is not a creature formed by chance, nor indifferent in the rank of beings, but the noblest work of a God, who is infinite in wisdom and whose designs are as unlimited as his perfections. In vain has a pragmatistical philosophy attempted

attempted to prove that man is an enigma as inexplicable as all that furrounds him. We have a Reason which teaches us to know ourselves, and which after having distinguished our intellectual from our corporeal substance, informs us what we owe to each. The soul as well as the body has its respective wants to be supplied. The imagination should be fed with hopes, to enable us to support our ills ; the memory should be furnished with a variety of facts and examples, in order to recall us continually to the recollection of Providence ; the will should form such desires as have eternity for their principle and their end ; the understanding should be applied to the contemplation of useful truths : in like manner, the body and all its different functions should be consecrated to the service of him who has given it life and motion. We should be attentive to supply its reasonable wants and to preserve its health, whereas sickness would render us incapable of discharging our respective duties : it would be criminal to
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debilitate the body by either intemperance or indiscretion: be wise with sobriety, says the great apostle. These are not arbitrary obligations but founded in the very essence of our constitution: our creator in forming us, left to us the administration of our persons, and gave us knowledge to govern ourselves according to the rules of justice and truth. Reason is established as a queen to influence our whole being and to direct all its operations; seated as it were on her throne, she dictates her laws and communicates to us the decrees of the Almighty; and it is by our strict observance of them we live like truly christian Philosophers.

Human nature, considered abstractedly, far from meriting that contempt, with which certain Cynics have affected to treat it, is the highest rank of dignity in the universe. All has been created for man, (says the scripture) and though our modern speculators have imagined that the moon and the planets
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are inhabited, as well as the earth, it will nevertheless be certain that the sun and moon were created for his use. Reason is not satisfied with hypotheses or fictions, she requires proofs. Our thought darts swifter than the lightning, and penetrates to the extremities of the universe, traverses in an instant the immensity of space, and subjects to its examination all those vast bodies that surround us; this may give us some idea of what we are, and of what the soul of man is equal to. She is an unfathomable abyss of greatness, when she gives a free scope to her desires and her ideas, the Earth and the Heavens seem to her but as an atom. When disengaging herself from matter, she takes her flight and soars as it were into the bosom of the most high, she suddenly feels herself enlarged and in some measure blended with the Divinity. Surely when we hold so intimate a connexion with that great Being, we should consider the august ministry we have to fulfil, and be careful not to degrade our nature by

an attachment to any base or unworthy objects.

What a world of wonders does man contain within himself! What a fund of riches in the understanding, the memory, and imagination! placed between God and the irrational creation, we should aspire to the glory of thinking well, of desiring well, of living well, and of dying well.

Such as act without reflection, such as seek only the perishable goods of this life, and suffer themselves to be hurried away with the torrent of the world, disfigure the work of God, and deface his image. Order requires that we should support the dignity of our immortal Being, that we should raise our thoughts above this earth in the contemplation of God, who is our only hope, and who alone can render us completely happy. Were it not for the neglect of fulfilling our obligations towards ourselves, we should not see so
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many proud, ambitious, and avaricious men, so many obscene and blasphemous writers. When the mind is perverted and the heart corrupted, man sinks to the lowest state of degradation.

Reason incessantly repeats to us these great truths, and invites us in the most pressing manner to lead a spiritual life; at one time she employs those pungent stings of remorse, that goad the guilty conscience; at another time she represents to us our duties, as the happiness and perfection of our being. Reason will also inform us, without the aid of books or masters, that we should respect that intellectual portion of ourselves as emanating from the divinity, that we should make a due discrimination between two substances so very different from each other, that the soul should assert its superiority, and maintain its ascendancy over the body, and as the apostle recommends, reduce it under due subjection. There is no person, if he retire a while from the tumult of the passions and bustle of the world, and seriously enter

enter into himself, who will not experience these sentiments. The soul, from time to time, has certain secret intimations that remind her of a future state; she then perceives that death is only the dawning of a new life, and looks forward with anxious expectation to a happy and glorious resurrection. This consideration should engage us to treat our bodies with respect: for though our members are but organised clay, yet their intimate relations and co-operation with our soul, should render them dear to us. It is not therefore allowed to profane; nor to destroy them. Our whole being is a deposit that we must one day return to him who intrusted it to us. This reflection also naturally leads to a more minute detail of our several obligations with respect to ourselves: the 1st is, to retain that happy simplicity which is born with us, and characterises the age of infancy: 2dly, not to defile the purity of the mind and heart, with the contagious examples of a perverse and corrupt world: 3dly, by a scrupulous attention to the dictates of Reason, to maintain

maintain that perfect harmony, which should always subsist between the soul and the senses: 4thly, to preserve the body from every excess contrary to prudence and sobriety. The great St. Augustine informs us that he kept a continual watch over himself, lest he should grant too much indulgence to his senses, which, as the wise man observes, are insatiable.—The eye is not tired with seeing, nor the ear with hearing, nor the tongue with speaking; we would for ever wish to feel and taste, so that our life seems to be merely animal: we find every thing irksome and disgusting, when we are no longer affected by sensible objects; hence it is that we look upon a life of retirement and solitude as truly miserable. To be secluded from the world, shut out from all its vain amusements, from all those brilliant follies that dissipation and luxury have invented, would seem to us a privation the most melancholy and deplorable; yet those who have been led to embrace this austere kind of life, and

to despise all these important trifles, were induced thereto, by listening to the voice of Reason; whilst others, by listening only to their passions and their senses, are so strongly attached to the world and its vanities. What, in fact, does Reason teach us with regard to the use of our senses? does she not inform us, that they should be kept as sentinals to watch over the preservation of our Being? that, in flying from one object to another, which are incapable of satisfying us, we tire ourselves in vain, and can find no repose but in the study of truth.

God has appointed our Reason as a monitor to recall us to our duty; if we are deaf to her instructions, we oppose the designs of Providence, and establish in ourselves a most frightful anarchy, instead of that wise government which the soul should exercise over the body. A more hideous spectacle, cannot be conceived, than that of a man who forgets what he is, and what he owes to himself;

himself; abandoned to every caprice, his mind becomes a void in which all reflection is lost.

We may reckon four descriptions of people who have no idea of their obligations towards themselves: the materialists, who acknowledge no other soul than the action of the muscles and the nerves, and consider their life as the motion of a bowl cast by chance, and which continues rolling 'till it arrives at its term: the libertines, who conceive no happiness but in the gratification of their passions, and are totally ignorant of the greatness of their destiny: those vain and frivolous men, who seduced by the futility of fashion's, and what they style the *bon-ton*, think of nothing but pleasing and shining in the brilliant circles of life; the rich and great ones of the world, who look upon their chimerical titles, as virtues, their riches as talents, and their pleasures as business, are wholly occupied in supporting their rank and dignity, in vain does Reason
cry

cry out to this description of people, they are deaf to her admonitions, and know not even that such a thing as Reason exists.

Is it not astonishing that among such an innumerable multitude of persons capable of reasoning, there are so few who make a right use of their Reason? they are afraid of coming at the knowledge of themselves, and prefer leading a mere animal life, and risking the immense happiness of eternity, rather than look back on themselves: the dove and the solitary sparrow on the house-top seem to meditate and reflect, is there but man alone, who wanders every where but where he is himself; or if he seems at times to recollect himself, it is merely to immerse himself in calculations of interest, or to give way to reveries and distraction of thought. Infinite is the detail of our obligations towards ourselves, every thing within us, and out of us, has its end and its use, our Reason is an inexhaustible source,

source, from which we draw motives of consolation in our afflictions, means of subsistence in our indigence and distress, and light to guide us in our uncertainty ; by her forecast, her penetration, and her activity she raises us up, supports and directs us. We ought not, it is true, be solicitous or uneasy about the morrow, as the Gospel teaches ; but we should exert our industry, to procure our necessary subsistence, and not to tempt Providence ; our life is not left to whim or caprice : the natural law has regulated all, and the christian law has perfected all. Our wants, our tastes, our goods, our ills, our pleasures, our pains all enter into the plan of our destiny ; if we derange this economy, we become a confused chaos, and counteract the designs of Providence ; the universe should be our model ; the flowers and the fruits come in their due season ; the nights and the days regularly succeed each other.

It is only by observing order, and leading a life that is in perfect harmony and unison, that we can avoid those defects which are so common among mankind ; this care and attention to order Reason requires of us, and it is of so much the greater importance, as it is the less attended to in general ; so many are the inlets to vice, and so few the remedies against it : from our very infancy, it enters through our ears and our eyes ; we inhale it, as it were, with the air we breathe, so widely has the contagion spread ; our first thoughts are often sins ; however, scarce had we reached the age of seven, when Reason began already to speak to us in a very intelligible manner. Let us recall to our remembrance that age which has passed like a shadow, we will recollect that we did not at that time commit a fault without blushing, and feeling an inward regret : we even then were able to discover the beauty of order, and the danger we exposed ourselves to in violating it ; and according as we grew up, we felt that he alone is

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respectable,

respectable, who knows how to possess himself, and that the only necessary science is that which conduces to the improvement and perfection of our nature. If the multiplicity of titles, which men have invented, had not obscured and almost entirely defaced our much more noble quality of rational creature, mankind would appear in this universe as so many sovereigns, whose dominion would extend over metals, plants, and animals ; and we should no longer doubt of that respect which an immortal soul owes to herself. To preserve the innocence and perfection of our Being, or to recover it when lost ; to observe and practise the maxims and precepts of religion, to merit an eternity of happiness, and avoid an eternity of misery, are not surely matters of indifference. Would to God all these fantastical customs which folly has introduced were entirely done away, and that the study and care of our everlasting welfare were substituted in their place. Reason cries out to us that we were created to be eternally

eternally happy ; wherefore not to take the most effectual means to ensure our future happiness, must argue the most unaccountable infatuation and delusion. And what are these means, but our exactness and fidelity in accomplishing the law of God ?

CHAP IV.

ON OUR OBLIGATIONS TOWARDS OUR NEIGHBOUR.

ALL mankind form one great society, wherein like the links of the same chain, they are all connected together ; their Reason, though more or less developed, according to the different formation of their organs, or the different degrees of understanding, informs them of the obligation they are under continually to serve and assist each other. They judge

of the wants and propensities of others by their own, and feel a natural inclination to beneficence. It is much to be deplored, that the violence of men's passions has so much weakened the feelings of humanity, and that vengeance and jealousy so often usurp the place of mildness and commiseration.

Alas! we frequently see mankind transported with envy and rage, seeking to injure and destroy each other, whilst the brute creation seem to discover a kindness and affection for their species. We might learn from them the most useful lessons, if we were reasonable enough to propose them, in some instances, as models for our imitation. The choleric and violent man sees his condemnation in the gentle dove, and the sluggard in the industrious ant; it is thus the instinct even of the brute becomes superior to the Reason of man, when he wantonly abuses it.

Luxury and refinements, and the vast disproportion they have introduced among mankind, have greatly injured and depraved our nature. He who sleeps on a bed of down, and whose table is covered with the most costly and exquisite viands, can hardly bring himself to acknowledge as his brother, the poor peasant who reposes on the cold ground, and eats his bread with the sweat of his brow. If the rich and great ones of the world, suffer a poor person of low extraction to approach them in private, they soon after revenge themselves on them in public by an air of haughtiness and contempt. But here, Reason pleads the cause of humanity, and thunders in the heart of the proud and the ambitious man; she incessantly repeats to him, that the only true greatness is in the soul, and that the souls of all men are the same as to their origin and their destiny; she reminds him of the feeble and indigent state in which all are born, and in which all must indiscriminately end.

As society has God himself for its first author and institutor, we become refractory to his will, and worse than savages, if we refuse complying with its duties. In order to preserve harmony in the world, it was necessary there should be a general intercourse of wants and interests, tending all to the same object; this necessity far from being painful or burdensome, is one of the most pleasing and consoling of our obligations. Man cannot enjoy the happiness of existing, but by doing good and assisting his fellow creatures. No person is a stranger for the true philanthropist. Citizen of the world, he cherishes alike the Greek and the Indian, the Asiatic and the European; he weeps with those who are in affliction, and rejoices with those who rejoice; all to all, he places his happiness in serving and obliging all mankind.

Such a conduct will no doubt, appear to many as wonderful, and perhaps romantic; it is such however, as Reason applauds.

applauds. The avaricious and the proud, who are entirely swayed by their selfish passions, are unacquainted with such exquisite feelings, and are deaf to the calls of humanity ; but can any thing appear more degrading and humiliating in the eyes of Reason, than the hardness and insensibility they affect for the distressed ? Is it not outraging and insulting our own nature, to disown or despise even the lowest of mankind ? If we esteem men only for their riches, is it not preferring the mere production of the Earth to the most excellent of God's works ? What ! then, is the dress of greater value than the body, or gold and silver more precious than an immortal soul !

We need not much profound study in order to know these truths, all that is necessary is to examine ourselves : every man discovers within himself those intimate relations he bears to all the individuals of his species. Our thoughts are continually directed to our neighbour,

bour, to him our speech and our letters are addressed, and notwithstanding our apathy or indifference, we are obliged frequently to have recourse to society. He who lives the most retired and secluded from the world, must perceive that he is still in the midst of a country or a city that is inhabited by other men : what would become of the greatest monarch, if he were deserted by all his subjects ? What would become of the nobility, if they were not surrounded by their domestics and their vassals ? in fine, what would become of each of us, if entirely left alone, we should perceive around us nothing but trees and rocks ? the very idea of a city, with only one single inhabitant in it, is enough to excite horror. The rich man and the labourer stand equally in need of each other : our whole life is a continual state of dependance ; and he who thinks himself the most free, is often the most enslaved. By these reflections, inspired by Reason, we discover a ray of immortality, even in the lowest of the human race,

race, and disdain not to call them our brothers. We should never treat with haughtiness or contempt those who serve us, for they are beings of the same nature of ourselves: let not the pride and presumption of the great, in order to degrade and humble their dependants, affect to represent them as mean and mercenary creatures: is it to be expected that a class of people, who have nothing, and who expect nothing but to be cast off when they are no longer fit for service, should be inclined from pure affection, to serve masters who often treat them no better than their beasts. Moreover, have we a right ever to dispense with the obligation of loving our neighbour, whatever may be his defects? even those who plunder us of our property, who seek to injure our reputation, or who even make an attempt on our lives, ought not to excite our hatred or animosity; Reason and Religion teach us to love all mankind, to lament their errors, and to deplore their vices. The soul is susceptible of so

many different sentiments, that if we cannot esteem the wicked, we can and ought to pity and compassionate them, the more so, as a consciousness of our own weakness must convince us that, a man who is abandoned by God, is capable of every excess, “let him who stands, take heed lest he fall;” says the great Apostle.

What a happy change should we see in society, if all its members were animated with true Christian charity: they would patiently bear each others burdens; no one would wish to domineer over or to supplant his neighbour; envy, malice and strife would be banished out of the world; all would be docile, courteous, humble and disinterested, and would study only to conciliate the friendship and good will of each other. It is not surely paying a very flattering compliment to the human character, to suppose that people are obliged to have recourse to a card table, in order to shun slander and detraction.

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What then, an immortal soul, formed for virtue, must be reduced to stratagems to acquit itself of its duties! What a subject of humiliation! but whatever kindness we may shew our neighbour, Reason teaches us that we satisfy only a part of what humanity requires of us, if we confine our wishes to his temporal advantage and prosperity, and do not extend our solicitude for him beyond this life. We should entertain for the future happiness of others, the same anxiety and desire we have for our own eternal welfare. We should be ever ready to give seasonable advice, shew good example, and hold such conversation as tends to inspire the love of virtue. This is undoubtedly the language of Reason, however strange it may appear to those who are accustomed to make use of obscene and impious expressions, in presence of their domestics, and perhaps even of their children; as if they wished to destroy their innocence and extinguish every sentiment of Religion in their hearts. How many
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fathers who overlook, or even encourage the loose and immoral conduct of their sons, and who think of nothing but their momentary fortune and advancement in the world ! how many among the Great, who act openly the libertine with more assurance, than others practise virtue ! If ever there was a time when the social duties seemed almost entirely obliterated and forgotten, it is in these our unhappy days : there is neither affection nor cordiality to be found in families, nor sincerity even among friends ; each person makes himself his own centre, and thinks of no one but himself : Relation, Friend and Citizen, are become empty sounds without any meaning. Selfish and contracted feelings have succeeded those generous and magnanimous sentiments that distinguished our fore-fathers. Some by reading the writings of Materialists seem to have become entirely matter, their whole study is in the pursuit of brutal pleasures and sordid interest, their soul appears to them as a spectre, which
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they cannot see, and of which they doubt, but of which they are still afraid : they dare not enter into themselves lest Reason should murmur, and hence they seek for dissipation abroad. Others, who acknowledge they have a soul, are either wholly taken up with vain and futile amusements, or deeply immersed in worldly business, which keeps their Reason captive, people of this description cultivate society only for mere pleasure or interest.

The obligations we owe to society require that we should see, entertain, and comfort each other ; the gift of tears and smiles was given us, to express the joy or grief, we feel at the welfare or misfortunes of our neighbour. Were people in general to consider that they were not made merely to satisfy their own liking, they would not find it so difficult to be pleased in company. A certain false brilliancy of wit, these affected airs, these manners, tones, and fashionable expressions, which are now so
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much admired, have utterly depraved the taste for what is solid and useful; plain unadorned talents, genuine and simple merit appear entirely grotesque; people would be less delicate, if they knew how to find out more employment and pay less visits.

It may not be amiss here to remark the baleful influence of *ill-humour*, that malady of the soul which is apt suddenly to assail us, and render us the scourge of our neighbours and our friends. Were it not for this wretched temper, we should not see husbands become so tyrannical, nor wives so phraptious, nor masters so inhuman. Sometimes it changes suddenly from extravagant joy to melancholy, from love to hatred, from caresses to invectives, from hope to despair, from avarice to prodigality, it deprives us of all consistency and even of ourselves: it excites the most unaccountable antipathies, and often takes away all the merit of our best actions. Reason, ever guarded in her proceedings,

proceedings, is always opposed to this preposterous failing, how often does she tell us that it is a foolish thing to be out of temper without cause? if we do not attend to her remonstrances, it is because we suffer ourselves to be hurried away by our passions; she informs us that man is reasonable only in as much as he is guided by certain and fixed principles: that his life always uniform, should never be disturbed by revolting alternatives; that the heart should be in perfect concert with the soul, and that the passions should be employed only in the support of virtue and the dignity of human nature. Were we attentive to this interior voice of Reason, it would operate in us the most wonderful and happy effects; it would engage us to be punctual in discharging our just debts, it would inspire us with benevolence and humanity; it would prompt us to visit the prisoner in his dungeon, and afford him consolation, to visit the poor man in his cot, to cheer and comfort him; to seek out the

widow

widow and the orphan, and protect them. We should consider our opulence only as a means of obliging and doing good, and our credit and interest as an opportunity of introducing merit to public notice, and procuring it its just reward. We should feel in some measure ashamed to possess more wit or talents, or property, or to be held in more consideration than others, lest the comparison might humble them. We should endeavour to lessen that distance which the inequality of conditions and custom have placed between us and the lower order: we should reckon among the days of our life, like that famous Emperor and Philosopher Titus, only those on which we had rendered some service to mankind.

It is only by respecting and loving others that we truly love and respect ourselves. Moreover, in hating our brethren, we prepare for ourselves a source of torment and uneasiness: “it is a terrible thing, says Madame de Sévigné,
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to have a hatred to sustain." Happy the man whose heart is free from all rancour and animosity, he will be cherished by God and man. Our greatest enemies are often appeased, enter into themselves and repent, when we oppose to their malice only patience and meekness; and it is our duty to contribute by every means in our power, to reform others and to render them virtuous.

CHAPTER V.

ON PROVIDENCE.

ALL things announce a supreme and intelligent Being, who spread out the Heavens, who gave stability to the Earth, who sank the profound abyss, who communicates motion to the whole universe. It was he who commanded the Sun and Stars to shine in the firmament, the
Planets

Planets to roll in their orbits, the Earth to cloath itself with verdure, the Rivers to glide on, and the Sea to ebb and flow. It is he who causes the blood to circulate through the veins and arteries of the smallest insect, as well as of the greatest monarch; it is he who opens and closes our career when he pleases; who has counted all the grains of sand as well as the hairs of our head; and who penetrates into the inmost recesses of our hearts. These truths are so sensible and evident, that the pagans themselves have held the same language. Seneca has composed a Treatise on Providence, which shews how eloquent and persuasive Reason is, in convincing us of the infinite power and goodness of God. We need only then interrogate Reason, to learn that there exists even in the very bowels of the earth, the action of an infinite wisdom, that creates the fountains, engenders the metals, and forms the diamonds; that confines those subterraneous fires, which are ready to burst forth at the least signal of his will, and
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under the appellation of nature, vivifies the roots of trees, plants, and flowers.

In vain does ignorance and impiety affect to discover no other principle of action in the universe than that of a blind unintelligible nature : there is no motion or life but from the impression of the Divinity, whose power nothing can resist ; who from nothing has called forth all things into being, without any other effort but a simple act of his will. What power ! what greatness ! God wills ; and worlds of insects, volatiles and fishes forthwith appear, move and obey the orders of their great Creator. God wills ; and intelligent spirits capable of knowing and loving him, proceed, as it were, from his hands, and instantly animate masses of organised earth, and form a wonderful society. God wills ; and Reason, which can neither be seen nor felt, imagines, plans, measures, and builds, contemplates and observes the Heavenly Bodies, computes and determines their greatness, dives into futurity,

turity, and perceives immensity of space. God wills ; and the world, divided into different forms of government, exists under various laws and regulations dictated by justice. God wills ; and a Religion, feeble and despicable in appearance, and which had for its pillars, a few simple and illiterate fishermen, overturns the Capitol, spreads itself from east to west, and triumphs over all the powers of the earth.

What sublime ideas does our Reason give us of the power and majesty of God ! it announces him as the centre and plenitude of all perfections, having immensity for extent, and eternity for duration. Providence is, as it were, the glance of an all seeing God, who with one look measures the earth, peoples and preserves it ; he looks, and the whole universe falling into dissolution, publishes, by its destruction, that there is nothing stable or permanent but that great Being whose existence is from eternity.

We experience continually in ourselves the influence of this ever attentive and beneficent Providence. We perceive our thoughts, in a regular and uninterrupted succession, ascend to that infinite Source, and seem reasonable and tranquil only when they arrive to that degree of elevation; we feel that the distinct action of the Soul and Body, which becomes one by reason of the intimate connexion that subsists between them, could not take place but by the influence and assistance of an absolute and superior will, which operates in us without constraining our liberty.

Tell me, blind and perverse Man, who dar'st to disown a Providence; how thou art able to stir even one of thy fingers: dost thou know the muscles and nerves necessary to be put in motion, or dost thou take the time and trouble necessary to make them act? thou wishest to stretch out or to bend thy finger, and instantly it obeys thy command. There is therefore something

thing supernatural in thee, that thou dost not see, and that co-operates with thy will, every time thou movest, if thou hast not paid attention to, or art not capable of reflecting on so astonishing a prodigy, rather than to contest or deny what thou dost not comprehend, class thyself among the brutes, and be silent.

Whoever denies an all wise Providence, must renounce his Reason, the admirable texture of a flower or a plant, the instinct and sagacity of an insect, the labour and industry of a bee or a silk-worm, are sufficient to prove the existence of an intelligent Being, whose operations are no less wonderful than his designs. If the world were only the production of blind chance, or of the mere fortuitous concourse of atoms, as some of our pretended Philosophers are pleased to consider it, the mechanism of a single bee-hive could not subsist; Motion, Instinct, Reason would be all confounded, and the universe
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would be buried in a frightful chaos. What misfortunes does not anarchy produce in a country! and what disorder do we not perceive in a house where the master is neither obeyed nor respected!

Cicero who had not the advantage, as we have, of the light of Revelation, has recourse only to Reason to deny the plurality of Gods, and to admit but one, who created and preserves us. If, says he, from the plan, execution, beauty and design of a stately Edifice, we conclude that an intelligent and skilful Artist must have been employed to preside over and direct it, how great must we suppose is the wisdom and knowledge of him, who projected, planned and arranged all the different parts of this Universe. This Sun, that never fails to appear at the precise moment of time appointed for him; this Moon, that returns faithfully each evening, as if she were called; this flowing and ebbing of the tide that seems, as it were, to have ears to hear the voice of its master

ter and obey his orders, are not these so many witnesses who depose in favour of an eternal, immutable, and all wise Providence, whose decrees are infallibly executed.

The more our Reason is confounded at the sight of those globes of fire, that roll over our heads; or at the recollection of these immense reservoirs confined beneath our feet; the more is it convinced of the power and greatness of that infinite Being, who made all, embraces all, and knows all. Though our Reason is lost in the midst of this great fluid that surrounds us, and without which we could not exist one single instant; though she knows not the essence of either spirit or matter; she has however sufficient knowledge to discover that the world could not have made itself, and that he who created it, must have been an all-powerful, all wise and necessary Being; it requires then no great depth of study or penetration to see that Spinofists and Atheists are fools, whose

whose minds have been perverted by the corruption of their hearts, the peasant on beholding the firmament, and the child on considering his own weakness, naturally acknowledge a Creator.

Is it not Providence, as Reason tells us, who has so regulated the goods and ills of this life, whether in reality, or merely in the idea which each individual forms of them, that all ranks of people experience nearly the same degree of joy and sadness? is it not Providence, who, to punish the rich and great ones of the world, for their excessive covetousness, and unbounded ambition, has delivered them up to such capricious and insatiable desires, which they can never satisfy? is it not Providence, who, to accomplish his designs, which to us are inscrutable, suddenly snatches away one in the beginning of his career, whilst he leaves another to live a century; Who heaps riches and prosperity on some, whilst he permits others to be stripped of all, and to pine

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in indigence and want ; who sometimes suffers the wicked to flourish, whilst he permits the just to be exercised by calumny and tribulation ?

Were we to enter into a detail of this animal life, which engrosses all our cares, we should again discover Providence in a most intelligible and visible manner. We should consider with astonishment and admiration how the great majority of mankind, without any other resource but their hands and their industry, bring up numerous families, and know not, after a series of years, how they have been enabled to defray all their expenses : if you ask a poor tradesman how he has contrived to educate and maintain such a number of children, he will tell you with surprise, that he cannot conceive from whence his resources came, unless from the bounty of Providence. Yes, the same God who nourishes the young ravens, multiplies daily the *meal of the widow of Sarepta*, and *with five loaves feeds five thousand people*.
How

How often in the most trying and desperate situations, have we felt the impression of the hand of Providence stretched forth to wipe away our tears, and to relieve us in our distress.

Oftentimes we imagine, like St. Peter, that the bark in which we sail, is ready to sink and to be swallowed up by the waves, and that we are just on the brink of ruin; but as soon as we enter into ourselves, we hear a voice that cries out to us, to fear not, but to put our confidence in him who *commands the sea and the winds*, and to recollect that we are always in the hands of a God, who never sleeps, and whose eyes are continually open on us; of a God who but opens his hand, and every animal is filled with benediction; who sends the dew, the rain, and the cool breezes to refresh the earth; who bestows on it all its beauteous and various colours, all its balmy fragrance and rich perfumes; of a God whose wisdom, according to the lively expression of the

Scripture, seems to sport and play in this universe, and whose delight is to dwell among the children of men. It is this infinite wisdom, whose almighty power calls forth that which is, as well as that which is not ; whose eternal decrees can disconcert and frustrate all the vain projects and designs of men ; for him there is nothing past or to come, all things are present to his view, he sees with one glance all successive generations from the first man to the last, as if they actually existed ; he has no need of any one but himself to enjoy, in the most eminent degree, the immensity of his happiness.

Were we not accustomed to judge of things by their mere surface or appearance, we should be convinced that nothing happens in the world, but what is determined by the express order or permission of divine Providence. We should not imagine that those diseases with which we are afflicted, or these insects that torment us, or those misfortunes

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tunes that befall us, are the effect of mere chance, or to be considered as real ills : all has been regulated and foreseen by that infinite wisdom, whose designs are impenetrable, but ever adorable and ever just. That father of a family who dies and leaves after him a number of helpless children, who seem to be so much in need of his assistance and industry ; those intimate friends, whom we so much loved and esteemed, and who have been suddenly snatched away from us, serve to teach us that there is no man necessary ; that we possess all, when we possess God ; that we should dread nothing nor consider any misfortune real, but that of incurring his displeasure ; that a death which appears to us as a most dreadful and deplorable calamity, may become the source of a thousand benefits which we are now incapable of conceiving, because our views are limited, and because the thoughts and ways of God are entirely different from the ways and thoughts of men.

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If these mysterious secrets which are now wrapt up in the darkness of futurity, were suddenly disclosed to our sight, we would form very different notions of the present occurrences and events ; we would be persuaded that what we consider a great misfortune, is in reality a peculiar blessing ; for instance this fit of sickness, or that stroke of adversity has brought us to a serious recollection of ourselves, has proved the means of our conversion, and ensured for us an immense Crown of Glory for eternity ; the most trivial incident in appearance is the link of a chain, which reaches to future ages, and becomes the principle and source of innumerable advantages. Such are the lessons Reason teaches us, in order to render us more cautious and circumspect in our judgments. Is it for us weak mortals to fathom the depths of infinite wisdom, to trace out the inscrutable ways of God, to presume to draw out plans, to form projects and designs according to our caprice or our prejudices ! God saw all
that

that he had made, says the Scripture, and it was good. This should be sufficient to calm all our doubts with regard to what we cannot comprehend in nature.

Our injustice and ingratitude towards Providence proceeds from the unrestrained liberty we allow our passions, suffering them to obscure our Reason, and considering this world as our last end : were we to reflect that this fleeting and tumultuous life is but a moment compared to eternity, and that it is from this eternity we should set out, in order to form a right judgment ; we would then discover the design and the plot of many things which now we are not able to reconcile or account for : for instance, we would learn that this good man expired in the midst of his career, because he was ripe for Heaven ; whereas that impious and wicked man is suffered to live for the trial and exercise of the just. All the different parts of this Universe are so many lines which
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are all united in eternity, the centre and term of all that exists. The man who keeps this perspective before him, is no longer surpris'd or alarmed at the apparent contradictions, or strange events which form the history of this lower world.

If we take a view of courts, we discover nothing but intrigues, duplicity, caprice, and all the various changes of fickle and inconstant fortune; if we walk through the midst of a great city, we see covetousness, frauds and the fruits of an industry merely human; if we range through the country, we behold rocks, mountains and vallies that seem promiscuously scattered here and there, as it were by blind chance; one is born a prince, another a plebeian, by a concurrence of circumstances that seem entirely fortuitous; some glitter in the midst of riches and honors, whilst others languish in wretchedness and obscurity, from a complication of causes unknown to us; you frequently see people, by a
kind

kind of impulse which they cannot account for, quit their kindred and their native homes to repair to foreign climes thousands of miles distant ; all this appears to be only the result of accident or chance, yet it is all ordered and regulated by Divine Providence. It is he who directs the lot and destiny of all ; who places one on a throne, and leaves another on a dung-hill , it is he who *disposing powerfully and sweetly of all, reaches from end to end*, and causes all to concur in the accomplishment of his designs. We are but agents or instruments in the hands of God, and whilst we seem to follow our own will, we are only executing what his sovereign will has determined. The universe, like those automatons which excite our admiration, seems to move in an imperceptible manner ; but it is the Supreme Artist that sets all its springs in motion, and directs them as he pleases. That almighty hand which has traced out in our countenance the marks of joy or sadness, has

also opened for us the course we have to run, and stops it in an instant.

What do I behold throughout all nature! cries out the admirable Fénélon, I see God, and God every where, and still God alone. But man seems to have eyes only to see shadows, while truth appears to him but as a phantom; what is nothing, is to him every thing; and what is every thing, seems to him as nothing. Men give credit to a thousand hypotheses or notions which are only the offspring of the imagination or of prejudice, and call in doubt the most incontestible facts. Without a Providence, who continually watches over us, could we venture to move or walk, where we have nothing but precipices and snares before us? there is no reasonable man who would not tremble at every step he takes, were he not convinced of the presence of an all powerful and bountiful God. Who, but that God has taught the ox to know his stall, the dog to know his master, the castor to build
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his house, the fox to conceal his prey, and the swallow mason-like to erect its nest. Read the book of Job, and you there discover the action of Providence in the smallest leaf that is carried away by the wind, or in the least drop of rain that falls from the clouds. Life and death obey his command, and the weakest cry proves his power as well as the rattling peals of thunder.

History is but a barren and dry recital, if in each event we do not discover, like the great Bossuet, an invisible Power and Wisdom who rewards and punishes; who raises or casts down; who builds up or destroys. We every where see this God both bountiful and terrible, dispensing his favours, or inflicting his scourges, inspiring love and terror. At one time in the dreadful execution of his vengeance, he overturns thrones, lays waste whole cities and countries by pestilence, famine, or the sword, and sweeps away thousands of their inhabitants. At another time he casts an eye
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of pity, and the shepherd exchanges his crook for a sceptre, and takes his seat among the annointed of the Lord. At certain times he raises up some extraordinary and privileged mortals, whom he employs as instruments to effect some great revolution in the political hemisphere, and *the face of the earth is renewed*. At other times he seems to leave the world, as it were, abandoned to itself, and entirely destitute of spirit or genius. Happy! thrice happy the reasonable man, who thus sees, admires, and adores the all-wise and just dispensations of Providence, with a mixed sensation of fear and hope, 'till God is pleased at length to manifest himself and discover to him all these secret springs which before were hidden from his view. Then he shall acknowledge that all was perfectly in order, and that the conduct of God with respect to the world, was a mystery not to be revealed till after death, and worthy to be the subject of our meditation and our praises
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for all eternity : then he shall have cause to rejoice that he lived in that state of obscurity and indigence which is now despised, and that he experienced those crosses and tribulations, which afforded an opportunity of exercising his patience, and of meriting an immense crown of bliss.

CHAPTER VI.

ON GOOD AND EVIL.

THE characters of Good and Evil are so clearly and distinctly marked, that those of the sect called Manicheans, admitted two opposite principles ; the one, they considered as the author of order, and the other of disorder. What can be more striking or sensible than this scene we every day behold of virtues and vices, and the continual struggle and opposition

opposition that subsists between them, whence originate so many intestine and open wars, at which humanity shudders. Our Reason cannot be deceived as to what constitutes the essence of good, and would undoubtedly be ever invariably attached to it, were it not diverted from it and hurried away by the violence of the passions. We mistake what is only apparent, for the true good ; this is the fatal error of the generality of mankind ; all set out in pursuit of happiness, and often think they have attained the reality, when they have only grasped at a shadow.

The general idea, therefore, of Good and Evil is not arbitrary or obscure : but let us here consider what this good is, that all are so desirous of, and this evil that all wish to shun. Without entering into useless discussions which would tend only to confound and distract our notions, we shall simply define Good, relatively to us, as the harmony and agreement of the soul with that immutable order

order which God has established ; and as often as this harmony is destroyed, there results a discordance, which we call evil : hence it follows that Good is something real, whereas evil is only the privation or want of order ; hence also it is manifest, that God, who creates only what is real, cannot be the author of evil.

Whoever would be so presumptuous and extravagant as to maintain that we have no idea of good, must necessarily deny that we have any idea of order : but who could dare advance so evident a falsehood ? has not the grossest and most ignorant of mankind a natural idea of order and symmetry, whereby they distinguish what is regularly arranged, from what is confused and disorderly, and find more pleasure in viewing a delightful garden, where all the beauties of art and nature are displayed, than a wild uncultivated spot over-run with weeds, where he sees nothing but barren rocks, briars, thorns, and brambles, scattered

scattered here and there in confusion. Our eyes, those faithful mirrors of the soul, naturally rest with complacency on regular and beautiful objects, and turn away with disgust from those that are deformed, because there is in us a principle of discernment which involuntarily attaches us to what is true and beautiful. I am aware that our ideas with respect to most things, are apt to vary with our prejudices and tastes ; yet, in point of beauty and order, there is a kind of centre of union in which all are forced to agree.

The most glorious privilege of Reason is to be able rightly to discriminate between good and evil, that is between what is conformable and what is contrary to the law. Men who are influenced only by flesh and blood, may vainly attempt to obscure these grand truths and maintain that the natural law is not universal ; the faculty of thinking alone, which constitutes the essence of the soul, evidently confutes this ground-
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less assertion. The order of the universe, as well as that which we perceive in ourselves, from the facility we find to form and combine our ideas, recalls us continually to that primordial order that gives colours, tones, and springs, to all that exists, and all that breathes. What a vast field would here open to our view, were we to enter into a philosophical dissertation on the science of numbers, which not being arbitrary, is found to be the same every where, in the Savage as in the Chinese, in the Peasant as in the Academician.

From the notion of good and evil, result the different virtues. Man, seeing himself placed as it were between light and darkness, and feeling that the soul cannot be happy but in as much as it is enlightened, eagerly turns to the fun of truth, and discovers by its light, the ideas that ought to direct him : he then advances with confidence in the road that leads to true happiness, and surmounts every obstacle that may occur :
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these are the virtuous part of mankind ; whilst those who suffer themselves to be hurried away by the violence of their passions, are continually wandering astray, without ever examining from whence they set out, or whither they tend.

Virtue therefore originates from the knowledge and love of order, whereas vice is the offspring of darkness and confusion. As soon as lust, envy, anger, ambition, and the other passions gain possession of the soul, she can no longer see, being blinded by the dark veils that cover her sight. If at times they emit a certain gleam, it is but the reflection of a fire, the more dangerous as it is often mistaken for the true light. Hence it is that many seem to enjoy calm repose in the most enormous vices : hence it is that the conscience loses all remorse, and becomes entirely calous or lethargic.

Reason

Reason never fails to cry out to every man, as soon as he begins to stray from the path of rectitude and order; but how can he hear her voice, when he no longer resides within himself? this unfortunate proneness to dissipation so common to mankind, is the fatal source of every evil; it reduces us to mere spectres without life or soul, and our actions are perpetually in contradiction with our origin and our destiny.

That evil which we consider as a matter of indifference or of little concern with respect to the Supreme Being, is a direct attack on his power and wisdom. God wills that his laws should be executed, and we violate and subvert them; God has established that order which constitutes the harmony of the universe, and we derange and disturb it: still he permits evil, in order to afford an opportunity of meriting, and to shew us that it is only by combating, we can obtain the victory. If every time we are ready to yield to the temptations

tations of vice, we would seriously enter into ourselves and interrogate our Reason, what powerful motives would she suggest, to restrain and deter us: What! for a false and momentary gratification will you risk your eternal welfare? will you expose yourself to disease, to remorse, to that excruciating anguish of the mind which arises from disorder? will you suffer your immortal soul to sink below the instinct of the brute? when once we begin seriously to reflect, we look back with horror and astonishment on the errors and extravagant folly of a licentious and disorderly life. We see behind us those precipices into which we had plunged ourselves in aspiring to rise. As Reason was given to each of us to be our oracle and our guide, what struggles must it have cost those proud ambitious men to stifle and suppress its murmurs? by shaking off all restraint of the laws of God and man, they opened to themselves a road to every species of crimes and disorder, cannonised the most shameful and enormous

mous vices, and considered the most sacred ordinances as the mere invention of human policy.

The dreadful ravages evil has committed in the world, exhibit a most hideous picture of all ages. When once this tyrant has usurped the empire of the senses, he enslaves the heart and blinds the understanding. The annals of history fully confirm this melancholy truth. They present to our view one continued scene of the deplorable effects of lust, anger, cruelty and ambition; they are, in a word, the reality of those frightful tragedies that are represented on the stage.

But what is much more lamentable is, that under the dispensation of a religion the most holy and pure in its doctrine, we still behold a continuation of the same evil and the same crimes that prevailed in the midst of idolatry. Nay, even the corruption which in the times of paganism proceeded merely from the violence

violence of the passions, seems now to be the result of cool and deliberate reflection.

Vice is now reduced to a system, and people are become libertines from principle; such is the dangerous and pernicious tendency of some of our modern publications, equally subversive of the morals and of the peace and order of society. We may justly exclaim with Cicero in his oration against Cataline, *What times ! What morals !* and yet some are pleased to call this the enlightened Age, the **THE AGE OF REASON.**

If in the midst of this universal depravity, Reason had not some resource in the few good and virtuous who continue to acknowledge and respect her, she might appear as a chimera, or the mere production of the imagination; but there still remains some pure and genuine virtue in the world, notwithstanding the efforts of impiety to tarnish its lustre. The idea and the existence
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of virtue can never be entirely extinguished: if some desert her, others rally under her standard. Our different relations to God are too many and powerful to suffer his knowledge or his love to be wholly obliterated: he is the life of the soul, and Reason will ever convince us that we have but a shadow of existence, unless we exist for him, there is no good but from him, and without good the universe could not subsist: it is not so with evil, it was introduced after a certain period. The world flourished in its happy state of innocence, when the spirit of revolt came to disturb and destroy its repose.

However Reason informs us that both the physical and the moral evil enter into the great plan of the Almighty, and that both may conduce to our real good. Who can fathom the depth of divine wisdom? who hath assisted at his counsels? who hath been able to investigate his ways or to know his designs? if it be a most certain and incontestable

testable truth, that God is justice and goodness itself, can we refuse to believe that all is perfectly in order, and that there is nothing that he has not regulated and foreseen, though this prescience and this order by no means destroy man's liberty ?

The daily experiments that are made in medicine and in natural philosophy, are enough to convince us that all created things have their use. How many insects, reptiles and plants, which before were considered noxious or useless, are now used in the composition of medical prescriptions. God has given the earth and its productions to man, in order that he might apply himself to study their nature and discover their properties. Before the use of silk was known, the worms that produced it appeared to be mere caterpillars, and were looked on with horror ; until people began to make use of the turtle, the crab, and the lobster for their food, their aspect seemed frightful and disgusting, it could
not

not be conceived how God could form such useless and deformed creatures. These considerations should silence all our vain complaints and murmurs against Providence: if there were no wolves, said, one day, a boy who was guarding a flock of sheep, there would be no shepherds, and I could not gain a lively-hood: this reflection, puerile as it is, gives us to understand that all creatures in this world serve each other mutually, and that every Evil is compensated by some Good.

If to these observations we add, that there is no real evil but the injury that is done to the soul, and consequently that all the reverses of fortune, all the crosses and calamities of this life, that sickness and even death itself, are only imaginary evils, must we not conclude, that all has been wisely ordained by Providence. In twenty, or ten years hence, or perhaps to-morrow, what will all these misfortunes appear, which now overwhelm us with grief and affliction.

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When ready to sink into the grave, will it be a matter of much concern to us, whether we lived in opulence or in poverty; in splendor, or obscurity? When surrounded with the gloomy shades of death, shall we even bestow a thought on those objects which before engrossed our affection. All has disappeared, all is forgotten; there remains but the idea of God, before whom the soul is then to appear, to receive its reward or punishment. Were these great truths ever present to our mind, our Reason continually retracing them in our memory, would become the guide and faithful guardian of our conscience: she would teach us to shun the honors and pleasures of this life, and the vain applause of men, to despise worldly pomp and riches and direct our thoughts and desires to Heaven.

As to the moral Evil, which is Sin, like a poison which is changed into an excellent and powerful remedy, it has been the occasion of procuring us the most inestimable

inestimable blessings. Thus St. Augustine, in the enthusiasm of Reason, exclaims, happy fault of Adam! fault necessary to obtain for us the immense benefit of a Redeemer! it is by sin the just are exercised; it is on account of sin they continually aspire to heaven, and consider this earth as a valley of tears, and a place of exile. Virtue, in opposition to sin, appears more beautiful, pure, and luminous, as the sun shines with greater lustre after emerging from a dark cloud; moreover, the dread of sin always keeps us on our guard, and in a state of humiliation, fear, and trembling, engages us to pray continually, to enter into frequent conversation with the Supreme Being, and to have constant recourse to the assistance of his heavenly grace.

These reflections are the suggestions of Reason, would we but duly attend to them, we should form more just and proper notions of Good and Evil; we should not place our happiness in earth-

ly possessions, nor in sensual gratification. The true Good, which is Virtue, can alone fully satisfy and elevate the soul, but the pleasures of this world serve only to dissipate, disturb, and degrade the mind, they always leave after them a void that we never can fill up. Man may fasten upon different objects here below, and vainly flatter himself with the hope of being completely happy in their enjoyment; there is no real happiness to be found but in the contempt of all created things, and in a firm attachment to God alone.

Whatever pleasure we take contrary to the order established by the Creator, as it tends more or less to derange the plan of the Universe, becomes a greater or less evil. In order to constitute a good action, the object, the end, and circumstances are required; if any one of these be defective, the action is really evil. Such is the clear and just idea Reason gives us of Good and Evil.

CHAPTER VII.

ON THE INEQUALITY OF CONDITIONS.

MEN by preposterous and chimerical distinctions, and by pretensions still more absurd, have placed such a vast disproportion between man and man, that they might almost seem to be of a different species. It is only Reason that approximates these distances, acknowledges and respects human nature in the most miserable, as well as in the most opulent. She laments that a man should be despised or thought nothing of, because he has no fortune or title of distinction. No doubt, subordination which is so indispensably necessary for the maintenance of order and harmony in society, requires that a certain deference should be paid to those who are constituted

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rated in power ; but does it follow from hence, that we ought to despise and disown those who cannot boast of riches or ancestry, but who, perhaps, may have a much more valuable stock of virtue and merit.

Reason analyses these goods and these honors -of which worldlings are so proud, she judges whether they have a right to despise such as are not possessed them. She examines what they are, how long they last, and what advantage they produce : she discovers that they almost entirely depend on caprice, or on prejudice ; that they pass like a flash of lightning, and are often the cause of the greatest misfortunes. Pride, ignorance, insensibility, the forgetfulness of one's-self and of God, are frequently the attendants on riches and worldly grandeur : they seem to dazzle at a distance, but when duly examined, are found to be an irksome burden. There is scarce any littleness or meaness that most of the great-ones are not ready to stoop

stoop to, in order to gain their ends ; as if they were condemned to pay this kind of interest for their opulence and their vain splendor.

How ludicrous and contemptible must appear in the eyes of Reason these haughty airs, these proud supercilious looks, which people of fortune are so apt to assume : would those, who thus abuse their pretended greatness, but look into their own hearts, they would there discover the testimony of truth that appears against them, and ceases not to reproach them with such ridiculous affectation ; but they are too frivolous and dissipated to attend to it ; they imagine they cannot support their consequence and dignity but by acting with *hauteur*. Let them descend for a while into the lower circles, and hear what the common people say of them, they will find, that simple as they are, they know how to take revenge of the pride of the great, by despising them in their turn, and that their eloquence on
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this subject is very energetic, for Reason is common to all conditions.

The inequality of conditions then is useful and reasonable only in as much as the individuals of every order, endeavour mutually to serve, instead of despising or envying each other, and all concur in promoting the general good of society, as in the human body, each member aids and assists the other. As the smallest streams help to supply the great rivers, so the poorest peasant contributes to the embellishment and preservation of the state. We all enter into the formation of that great chain of beings which extends from God down to the most diminutive insect, we derange the links of it, if we quit that situation in which Providence has placed us. O thou rash and proud man! who lookest down with disdain on the poor labourer who tills the land, knowest thou not that it is he who furnishes thee by the sweat of his brow, the necessary provisions for thy support, and but for him,

him, famine would besiege thy palace and fill it with the horrors of death? What! the blood that flows through thy veins belongs in some measure to that rustic, whom thou wouldst scarce vouchsafe to look on? but to humble thy pride, let me tell thee that, whilst thy existence is of no consequence to the state, his is the support of it.

O how truly respectable is the honest, humble, and laborious part of mankind in the eyes of Reason! were we to follow them from the first dawn of day, 'till after the setting of the sun, and compare them with those drones, those vegetating beings, who are only a burden on society, we would learn to set a just value on the most useful and industrious class of the community; nay, we often find more pure and genuine sentiments, more disinterestedness and generosity in the poorer and lower order of the people, than among the rich and great-ones of the world.

We may here add, that one of the principal causes of disorder and confusion in society, arises from the restless disposition of people aspiring to situations and employments which they are not qualified to fill, and quitting that sphere of life for which they were destined : when men are hurried on by the impulse of their passions, they imagine themselves equal to any undertaking they embark in, however arduous or critical. It would be an useless enquiry to examine whether a perfect equality of conditions would be more advantageous to mankind, than the present inequality ; Reason teaches us that it would be folly in the extreme to wish for what cannot be, and that wisdom consists in living content in whatever state or condition Providence has placed us. External things are apt to make too strong an impression on our minds, because we do not reside within ourselves : is not our essence the same under whatever kind of government we live, whether monarchical or republican ? When the mind

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knows how to possess itself, it remains immoveable amidst all the the changes or revolutions that happen in the world; it considers the most brilliant and distinguished employments as a theatrical exhibition; in a short time the scene is closed. We should judge in like manner of the moral as of the physical order: as a Parterre pleases by its variety, so the mixture of society has its charms: the sudden fall of one, and the elevation of another; the prosperous and affluent condition of some, and the wretched and indigent state of others, are objects which should engage us ardently to aspire to that happy state of perfect justice, in which there will be no vicissitude nor reverse of fortune. Change is necessary in a world which cannot exist but by motion; we are therefore to expect revolutions here below, and consider, according to the expression of the wise man, that there is nothing stable or permanent under the sun.

CHAPTER VIII.

ON THE NECESSITY OF LAWS.

AS all men have their different tastes, propensities, and prejudices, it was absolutely requisite that there should be a point of union, and a certain tie to bind them to the observance and practice of the same duties and the same virtues; without this precaution which wisdom suggested, the world would be continually involved in a state of anarchy and confusion. When there existed but a few simple shepherds dispersed here and there, and who knew no other interest or care but that of tending their flocks, the natural law sufficed; but since people began to build and inhabit cities, since the earth has been divided into kingdoms, provinces, and private possessions,

sessions, the necessity of laws and regulations to provide for the wants and to preserve order in society, became indispensable. Those laws though human, yet having a connexion with the Divine will, and emanating from the natural law, which the Almighty has implanted in the breast of every man, should be considered as sacred obligations, which it would be criminal to violate or infringe. Seeing the encroachments that Vice is making daily on the conscience, Reason with great justice applauds the existence and the vigorous execution of the laws. They are her protection and her support ; it is from them she derives that authority which enables her to prevent or to punish disorders. Difference of climate or of government, may give room to different laws and regulations, but their principle and object is the public Good. In the midst of so many jarring passions which are so easily enflamed, and cause such dreadful conflagrations, how uncertain and precarious would be the tenure of life or property,

perty, if Reason had not issued her edicts, and armed magistrates with power to stem the torrent of vice, and oppose the progress of injustice, all would become the prey of the most powerful and rapacious plunderer. To the disgrace of human nature, it must be acknowledged that the brute creation seem to shew much more wisdom in following their instinct: this, however, proves in man the liberty of doing Good or Evil; which liberty, though often fatal in its effects, distinguishes us from the beast and affords us the opportunity of meriting.

It was by the light of Reason that legislators discovered and framed those laws which they have transmitted to us, it was Reason pointed out to them the abuses they ought to reform, the rewards and punishments they should decree. If the laws were only the mere effect of caprice, or of tyranny, (as certain dangerous writers pretend) they would have changed with the fashions;

one and the same generation would see them expire and revive. Whatever is connected with the essence of things is always lasting; now the laws are connected with us and we with them, and it is this mutual bond that unites us to God and to the different orders of Society; a bond which is dissolved only by death, at that last moment when we are to return to him who formed us, and who then, no longer communicating his will to us through intermediate agents, becomes himself our Legislator and our Judge.

The natural law which is comprised in ten principal commandments, has a thousand ramifications, from which all other laws are derived. All are not capable of discovering this connexion; but those who are acquainted with all the different relations, who penetrate into future events, and by deducing consequence from consequence, descend into the most minute detail, and trace effects to their first causes, they can perceive
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that the most simple regulation has a reference to the divine precepts. The intimate communication that subsists between God and man, is what gives to the laws all their force and efficacy. All power is derived from God, and we are bound to submit to all legislative authority in man, as being sanctioned by God himself; except in the case where fanaticism or impiety should order any thing contrary to religion or justice; for then such an order, far from being a law, would in reality, be an infraction of it; hence Reason which enjoins submission to all lawful authority, would in such case, direct us to disobey, and hence the Apostle prescribes a *rational obedience*.

Alas! what would become of the laws, or the necessity of making laws, if a hateful tyranny could compel us to commit evil. Government was established to encourage us to Good, either by threatening punishments, or promising rewards. But if unfortunately, the contrary should happen, we
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ought not to hesitate to sacrifice our lives rather than submit: thus the Theban Band, when the Emperor Maximinus commanded them to exterminate the christians, laid down their arms, and fell victims to the Tyrant's fury, in order to become the Glory and Triumph of the cause of truth and justice.

The more numerous the laws and regulations of a country, and the more vigorously they are executed, the more free and secure is the virtuous man. The good citizen dreads nothing but plunder and disorder, because his Reason tells him that all is safe, where all is well regulated. People *hate the light* only when they act wrong; and hence we find that they revolt against the sacred laws and ordinances of Religion, merely because they wish to live without restraint, without shame or remorse, and perhaps without honesty. All those infamous writings that have appeared against Christianity and against all lawful government, are but so many strata-
gems

gems to prepare the minds of men to shake off the yoke of virtue, and to habituate them insensibly to vice and fraud.

In order to be more clearly convinced of the wisdom and the necessity of laws, it would be advisable to read the Treatise of St. Thomas on that article ; what he has written on that subject is so solid and methodical, that Grotius recommends it to a German Prince as a most excellent work. It is well known Grotius was a protestant, and consequently his testimony cannot be suspected of prejudice ; but Reason alone is sufficient if we consult her, she loves and admires order, and recommends patience and docility to all, as the sure means of rendering us wise and happy.

CHAPTER IX.

ON THE USE OF THE SCIENCES.

IF the Sciences had not been suffered to degenerate by the abuse of those who make them subservient to their passions and identify them as it were with their prejudices, they would become an additional light joined with that of Reason. What more wonderful, than to see men by the aid of science, penetrating into the bowels of the earth, analysing metals, pointing out the course of the stars and telling their different revolutions, sub-
 jecting shadow, which is nothing but a privation of light, to mark the hours; defecting bodies and determining their different properties, launching into immensity, conversing with celestial spirits, reasoning on the immortality of the
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soul, and on the nature of God himself?

How delightful it is to behold science in the possession of an Augustine! what penetration! what sublimity! it is an emanation of light that returns to its source, a fire that consumes and devours the passions, a living water that springs up to eternal life, a sweet perfume that exhales its odour to God alone, a thunder-bolt that bursts forth in the midst of lightning. You little diminutive mortals! who wish to make a monopoly of this science, and to dispose of it at your will, who make it serve as a nutriment to feed your vanity and your pride; ought you not blush to disfigure thus the beauty of eternal wisdom and truth, and to squander away those treasures which were only intrusted to you in order that you might admire and improve them? in what a poor and abject state must the sciences appear when subjected to your caprice, to your passions, and your prejudices! Reason shudders.

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at the recollection of the scandals and the evils resulting from your studies and your knowledge, or rather from your ignorance masked under the vain appearance or pompous show of philosophy. It is to be lamented that the world should be the dupe of such imposture; by the fascinating charms and seducing ornaments of style, you may perhaps strike, astonish and dazzle the eyes of superficial readers; but how long can such a vertigo disturb Reason? the delirium is soon over, and the soul which you wished to annihilate, revives and resumes her rights. The time may come, and perhaps is not far distant, when those who appear to hold the key of science, who decide so dogmatically and usurp the praise and admiration of the world, will fall into discredit and just contempt. Are these, (people will then say) the vain boasters who assumed infallibility to themselves, though they denied it to the Church? they have passed away, their productions were but the reveries of mad-men. The sciences then are valuable

luable only in as much as the use we make of them is reasonable and lawful, or, more properly speaking, they have no real existence but in contributing to promote the cause of Religion and the good of Society. Would to Heaven that people rightly understood these truths! they would not be so prodigal in bestowing their incense and encomiums on many who make but a vain and barren display of knowledge: but it is sufficient at the present day to possess a fluency of fine words, and to assume an imposing tone, in order to obtain the suffrages of the public, whatever paradoxes or extravagant systems one may advance; so true it is that singularity is sure to please, and that fashion sways the world.

Thus it happens that the sciences which ought to be the consolation and support of Reason, are often the cause of her humiliation and her downfall; the present age seems in this particular far to exceed all the preceding ones:

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our libraries are so many witnesses that attest this melancholy truth, in reviewing them, what a motley collection will you find of impious and immoral productions? what a multitude of books in which Reason is degraded, Virtue ridiculed, and Religion insulted! it is a rare science now to know the good authors, and a great merit to esteem them.

An excessive avidity to read every thing has been productive of the worst effects. One of the wisest petitions we could address to God would be to beseech him to deliver us from an immoderate thirst of knowledge: our mind like the sea has its boundaries; if it exceed its limits, it strays and is lost. It is only by attending to Reason that we direct the sciences agreeably to the intention of him from whom they emanate, and that we discover in their sublimity the subject of our humiliation. Reason every moment feels her own weakness and insufficiency, and it is in
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consequence of feeling it, that she looks with pity and contempt on those arrogant and presumptuous spirits, who imagine themselves capable of comprehending and explaining every thing. All the sciences will have an end, Charity alone will subsist for ever ; for we were not created to be astronomers or mathematicians, but to merit by a good and virtuous life, an infinite reward hereafter.

The sciences are to be esteemed only in as much as they serve to engage our attention, to detach us from the pleasures or rather the follies of the world, and afford us the means of being useful to mankind, they help moreover to familiarise us with truth, on which they are founded ; and this is a most consoling reflection : study ought to appear insipid, when it has no other object but self-love or vain curiosity.

This is the language of Reason, which reproves and condemns all those who
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pretend to science, but who do not extend their observations beyond this Universe: as the soul has an idea of what is eternal and infinite, it naturally desires that our studies should be no less confined, and always considers itself in a retrograde direction, unless when advancing towards the Supreme Being, of whom it is the most lively expression. This perhaps might be the proper place to assign to each science its different rank, according to its utility; but as every one is apt to boast of the sciences he has acquired, in order to avoid all dispute, it may suffice to say in general, that the study of morality, including metaphysics and theology, as also the knowledge of medicine, joined with experimental philosophy, ought to have the pre-eminence. As we have nothing here below but our souls and bodies to take care of, these are the peculiar sciences that procure us the means of knowing and governing them, according to their respective

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tive wants, their destination, and the order of Providence.

When the Apostle said, that Science puffeth up, and Charity edifieth, he alluded only to the bad use that is too generally made of science: for who was better qualified to speak of it, than he, who besides his supernatural lights, was surrounded with Greeks and Romans, whose eloquence and philosophy turned entirely on error, and whose only object was vain glory and ostentation? happily for us the introduction of Christianity has sanctified the use of science; we act contrary both to Religion and to Reason, if the end of our studies be to gratify pride or curiosity. As long as we are guided by Reason, we will only wish to acquire that knowledge, which will teach us to live better; and even, those studies, which we apply to for our amusement, will become useful; they will serve as a relaxation, and prepare us for meditation and labour: thus when we act like rea-
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sonable Beings, we find an advantage in our very recreations. The other animals have no need to study or to learn, because their instinct directs them infallibly in whatever is necessary for their destination; whereas man was created to extend and improve his knowledge, to aim at the perfection of his being, and in some measure to govern this Universe. The faculties of the soul are gradually developed, it acquires new lights, which elevate and spiritualise our nature. It was for this end Colleges were established; for to consider them in any other light, would betray an ignorance of their institution; it was judged necessary that there should be in all great Cities a constant source of learning, in order to give youth an opportunity to apply to study, to open their minds, to form their hearts, and to qualify them to fill the respective stations, for which Providence had destined them.

CHAPTER X.

ON THE LOVE OF ONE'S COUNTRY.

THE quality of Citizen is so dear and valuable a title, that our divine Legislator himself has honoured it by shedding tears over the ungrateful country that gave him birth ; he expresses his tenderness and concern for his unhappy countrymen, by the similitude of a hen anxiously gathering her chickens under her wings ; he bewails, in the most pathetic terms, the dreadful calamities they are about to draw on themselves, through their obduracy and blindness : Jerusalem, Jerusalem, exclaims he, didst thou but know in this thy day, that is, whilst it is yet time, the woeful evils that impend thee ! he commanded his disciples not to preach his Gospel to other countries, until his

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own should reject it. We love, says an antient writer, the very walls of our City : indeed the place where we drew our first breath, should seem to us, as it were, a consecrated spot, that recalls us continually to ourselves, and awakens all our feelings. At the sight of it, we seem to be born again, it renews all the scenes of our past life, revives the remembrance of the pure and innocent pleasures of our infant days, and affords a satisfaction to the mind, that cannot be expressed : thus the mother of St. Chrysostome, seeing he was determined to quit her and retire into the desert, could not find any means so effectually to prevail on him to remain with her, as to shew him the Bed in which he was born : no sooner did he behold it than he burst into tears, and conceived so great an affection for the house of his birth, that he forthwith renounced all thoughts of forsaking it. What a powerful impression did the words of Coriolanus's mother make on him, when she represented to him the atrocity of turning

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ing his arms against Rome, his native Country.

Our Reason, no doubt, tells us that we should look upon the whole earth as a place of exile, and reconcile ourselves to reside wherever Providence may appoint ; at the same time, it inspires us with a particular propensity and attachment to that place, which has been our nursery and our cradle. Its climate, its diet, its manners and, even, its prejudices are more congenial to our temper and constitution, every country has some peculiar dish or ragout, for which the natives have a singular liking, though perhaps it be not the best : the same may be said with respect to usages and customs. There is a sort of national spirit, that is discoverable, even, to the third or fourth generation, in those who have been transplanted to another country ; it is as it were a taste of the soil, like that which is found in exotic plants.

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The love of our country being so intimately connected with the soul, an extraordinary revolution must have taken place in our heads and our hearts, whereas this patriotic spirit seems now almost entirely extinguished. The contracted and mercenary passion of self-interest has succeeded in place of those refined and noble sentiments, that generous enthusiasm, which distinguished our fore-fathers and obtained for them the glorious titles of heroes, of saviours and guardians of their country. When men shake off the yoke of Religion, every other tie is insensibly dissolved; how can it be expected that they will acknowledge their native country, when they make it a merit to disown the Church, which at their birth received them into her bosom, enrolled their names in her annals, and procures them such inestimable advantages. A total indifference or repugnance to study and industry, an excessive love of sensual pleasures, the confined and bad education parents give their children, that
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cruel insensibility which some of the great ones affect towards the wretched and distressed, their unwillingness to retrench their unbounded luxury, in order to supply the wants of the state, are convincing proofs of the little affection people now bear for their country. How many who enter the army or embrace other professions, and acquit themselves badly of their duties, because they love themselves more than the state; how many who bury their talents, and do not reflect that their country has a just claim to all their exertions, how many who continue all their lives in a state of Celibacy, though not from a love of continency, and affect not to know, that marriage is the resource of the state, and the general vocation of mankind.

Were we to take a review of all the different states and conditions of life, we should find that the good of the community is but little attended to, the generality of people seem to consider it as a mere chimera, though each individual

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forms a part of it. The great think only of aggrandising themselves, and the rich of adding to their riches ; the military man is wholly intent on his promotion, and increase of pay ; the lawyer endeavours to make the most he can of his client, by prolonging and multiplying law suits ; the ecclesiastic is indefatigable in seeking preferment in the Church, in heaping Benefice upon Benefice, and engrossing to himself what would be sufficient for the support of twenty others, who perhaps are far superior to him in virtue and talents, and who are left to pine in obscurity and want : the merchant avails himself of every advantage, to enhance the price of his goods ; the stock-jobber and discounter employs illicit and usurious means, to extort from those who are under the necessity of applying to them ; in the lower orders you discover nothing but petty frauds and imposition ; it is thus the country is impoverished and weakened.

Shall the Romans, then, be the only people who had a true love of their country, and who justly merited the title of Citizens. What zeal ! what courage ! what ardor did they not display for the public good ! totally insensible to their own private interest, they forgot themselves and their families, when their country called on them to sacrifice their repose and even their lives in her defence, they have been seen even, to immolate their own children, sooner than endanger the safety of the state, by tolerating in them a violation of its rigid discipline, declaring in the face of the Universe, that they knew no kindred so dear to them as their Republic which they idolized.

There is no man of exalted sentiments who must not feel how “ *Sweet and Glorious it is to die for one’s country.*” The names of those who distinguished themselves in defence of their native land, have been preserved and rendered illustrious ; this was the first origin of Nobility. Men have in all times
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tached the greatest marks of honor to the glory of serving the state. All those titles, orders and armorial bearings were instituted merely as distinctive marks of merit and valour, and we should blush at possessing them, if we have not the spirit to emulate the virtues of our ancestors ; in reality our condition is much inferior to that of the Bee and the Silk Worm, (those useful insects that help to supply our wants, and afford us instructive lessons) if we are so unfortunate as to live only for ourselves.

The most brilliant actions are not always those that are most meritorious, or useful to the community, there are many obscure Citizens entirely unknown to the world, who in their humble station contribute to serve and instruct mankind, and form projects which are adopted by ministers of state. Thus the smallest springs often set in motion the most cumbrous machines. We owe respect, obedience and love to that country which gave birth to us, and to
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our ancestors. We honour humanity in honouring our native land; almost every great City, whether antient or modern, is decorated with statues which represent *the friends of mankind*: this is the title that an author, distinguished for his patriotism, has given to an excellent work which he published; and this title we also shall merit, if, free from fraud, from ambition and pride, we consecrate our talents and our labours to the glory of our country, and the advancement of the public good; but when will this happy time arrive?

CHAPTER XI.

ON THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE WORLD.

IT is not in an over refined politeness, nor in studied discourses, nor in affected manners that the knowledge of life, or a proper demeanor consists. Reason laments these airs, these tones, these quaint expressions, which our people of fashion seem to consider as the criterion of taste, and the most agreeable ornaments in the polite circles : if the mind were always in perfect unison with the heart, it would, no doubt, contribute much to the advantage of the soul ; and a becoming decency of behaviour, which may be called the polish of society, would no longer appear to be the effect of caprice or of art : there ought to be a certain degree of candour in our manners

manners, which should influence our whole conduct through life.

Many among the great render themselves contemptible, by affecting a language of court, entirely different from their manner of thinking. They imagine that bows and scrapes and a certain phraseology exempt them from the necessity of being sociable or generous, and that they confer a great obligation, when they deign to notice you. An easy and free deportment, however some may endeavour to ridicule and despise it, will always gain the applause of the Multitude. A soul that unbosoms itself, an affable character and an insinuating mind, are the only sure and effectual means of winning people's hearts, and none but those who reduce these rules to practice, can ever rightly succeed, were they ministers or ambassadors. One may easily see into a mysterious affectation ; we are immediately on our guard against surprize, when we meet a person who, to use the expression, is imprudently

imprudently discreet. Reason, which should always preside over our tongues and our eyes, requires that our conversation should be tempered with sweetness, without being insipid or disgusting, that our looks should preserve a becoming dignity, without haughtiness, that our carriage should be noble and graceful, without affectation. When one has these exterior accomplishments, all that remains then, is to watch and seize the proper occasions of doing every thing in season. Nothing can be more ridiculous and more unbecoming than to speak, when one ought to remain silent. The experience of the world teaches the necessity of according with those, with whom we live. Wit is dispensed with, provided we are complaisant and condescending : we cannot, then, really be said to know life, unless we know how to bear restraint and, even, what may be irksome and displeasing.

Those men of pleasure, who fly from circle to circle, and who love to cull, as
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it were, the quintessence of society and wit, are far from having the manners that true politeness requires ; they affect to appear amiable, yet no one likes them ; they wish to be considered pleasing and agreeable, though they have nothing agreeable or pleasing to recommend them. All consists in being affable and obliging, and in keeping ourselves on a level with those we converse with. It is not by setting up for men of wit and talents that we are to expect to be considered as such, but in making the wit of others appear to advantage : we cannot with impunity ingross the conversation to ourselves ; self-love revolts at it, and people are often astonished to find, that they have made enemies of those, whom they expected to have for admirers. Reason will inform us, that without being too diffident, we should communicate our sentiments with reserve, that we should study the different characters, that we should know how to suffer, as it were, a temporary eclipse, in order to shine afterwards with a greater lustre. We must not
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however conclude from all this, that we are to wait to be pressed to join in conversation, as some require to be entreated and solicited a long time, before they can be prevailed on to sing : it is only meant, that we should wait our turn, and allow others the opportunity and satisfaction of shewing their wit.

Politeness varies according to places and circumstances, the manners of a courtier would not become a simple citizen, those of a merchant are not the same as those of a man of quality : all these different shades are easily distinguished by one, who is thoroughly acquainted with the world. Were young people to embark later into life, they would be better enabled to learn its usages and manners ; but they are frequently introduced into company, at an age, when every thing is permitted them, which occasions strange abuses ; they will neither listen, nor bear to be controlled. A certain spirit of independence, impatient of all restraint, has universally

fally prevailed, which seems to take a pride in rejecting indiscriminately all established customs. The son no longer respects the father, the wife pays no attention to her husband, servants disregard their masters, the ties of society on the point of being dissolved, are only kept together by a passion for gambling. The different circles present to the eyes of the Sage nothing but ridiculous and affected manners, and adulterated morals. True and genuine politeness, or a real knowledge of the world, announces itself under a very different appearance, it carries with it its letters of recommendation, it interests, it pleases; it neither displays the pride of riches, the levity of foppery, nor the ridiculous airs of affectation and vanity; it makes itself all to all, and leaves every one at his ease. It criticises with delicacy, moralises without pedantry, and even in joking preserves a becoming dignity.

The best proof that our politeness is conformable to Reason, is when it forces
applause:

applause : things must flow naturally from their source, in order to be esteemed ; the man, who is endowed by nature with a gentle and candid disposition, will please much more in company than he, whose manners are studied. There are no general rules to be given for conversation : some people speak too much, in speaking but little, there are others, you would never be tired listening to ; some please in discoursing on common subjects, whereas others disgust you with their lofty speeches. Persons who compose serious works are often insipid and mere children in conversation : whether it be, that they do not wish to take the trouble to raise themselves to the pitch, their reputation announces, or that their spirits have been too much exhausted by study, and that they wish to distract their attention and divert it with trifles, they seldom appear to much advantage : it must also be acknowledged that people in the world imagine, that an author should always speak like a book ; but should it not
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rather be expected, that those who reserve all their wit for conversation, should be the most interesting in company.

Reason continually suggests to us the most admirable instructions with respect to our conversation, our writing and our acting : if we would carefully attend to them, our letters would perhaps be less eloquent, but they would be more sincere ; our discourse would be less studied, but more persuasive ; our actions less brilliant, but more deliberate ; in using less art, we would learn to hear, and to be heard.

The true knowledge of life consists in the knowledge of pleasing ; but we should be well persuaded, that the way to please is not to wish to appear too polite. Those persons who always affect a soft and sweet manner of speaking, who are continually paying compliments, who make a simple visit a business of great consequence, who spend their days in
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passing encomiums, in returning thanks and making apologies, are always disgusting and insipid ; and such manners, far from proving a good heart, rather indicate a timid and groveling soul.

There is another indiscretion to be observed in the intercourse of the world, that of giving advice upon every occasion, whether right or wrong, under pretence of friendship. Such fond advisers render themselves odious, and whatever liking one might have had for them, is soon changed into indifference, if not into down-right hatred. This defect is the more to be dreaded and guarded against, as, by wishing to reprove, one is apt to contract a habit of never speaking but to give lectures. *We often see the mote in our brother's eye, and do not perceive the beam in our own.* Besides is it not unreasonable to expect that others should conform to our whims, or to whatever notions we form of things? Oftentimes what might be imputed to us as a want of politeness, may
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not to another, who is supposed to be more engaged in business, or who is known to be more liable to distraction : for instance, a man of study is not censured for being absent at times ; and if it were lawful to dissemble, he ought even to affect it, in order to get rid of many useless ceremonies and grimaces.

That kind of independent spirit, which proceeds from levity or libertinism, is odious in society ; but the independence of an immortal soul, which, by its application, and greatness rises superior to a thousand little insignificant customs, is to be admired and praised. Visits, salutations and compliments are requisite ; but we should comply with them as rational beings, who would be ashamed to place our existence in such trifles. If we do not make a reserve of at least two thirds of ourselves and of our time for reflection and useful employment, we are much to be pitied. What sort of a life is that of merely getting up, and going to bed ! and yet such is the life
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that a considerable part of mankind lead; between morning and night, there is nothing but a great void, which is not to be conceived in the course of a rational life. How long will people continue this kind of non-existence?

CHAPTER XII.

ON THE CONTEMPT OF INJURIES.

WEAK mortals are so fallible in their judgments; reputation is a thing so arbitrary, and calumny so common, that we should be almost insensible to whatever good or ill may be said of us. That which neither encreases nor diminishes our being, and leaves us in a word, just such as we are, should not,
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in any manner, affect us. Now does either praise or dispraise take away one line from our stature, or add one to it? does it alter one feature of our countenance, or one degree of our understanding? it is only the notion we form of it to ourselves, that rejoices or afflicts us; but is this notion conformable either to Reason or Religion?

Do they not teach us, that we should accomplish the law, only with a view to God? that though we had done all the good imaginable, we would be still, but unprofitable servants, that there is no virtue we can call our own, because every good gift descends from the Father of Lights, that the most brilliant talents are often the means of ruining us with more Eclat, that men of the greatest genius are frequently those, who fall into the greatest errors, and that those who praise, are either actuated by self-love, which feels a gratification in praising men of merit, or find it their interest to flatter those in office?

Moreover

Moreover is it not the spirit of party, that blind and fanatical spirit, that is always prodigal of praise or calumny? what a fine principle! what a fine source is this to make an impression on a rational being! One should rather lament the errors, the prejudices, the paradoxes of mankind, than be afflicted or puffed up by their applause or their censure. I could wish that every one who is attacked by libels, would act like the Emperor Theodosius, who, on hearing that some person had insulted and abused his statue, laid his hand coolly on his face, and said, *that has done me no harm.* I could wish, that like Cæsar, people would only know how to forget injuries: or rather I could wish that following the example of true Christians, they would love their enemies, and disarm their malice, only by silence and meekness.

If we reason rightly, we shall undoubtedly find that we are, for the most part, the framers of our own uneasiness and

misfortunes. We wish to answer those who criticise or calumniate us, and thereby we only add fuel to their envy and fury. Ah! why not rather imitate the most illustrious personages who have been calumniated; (for but few of them have escaped persecution) they shewed not the least uneasiness or concern. Cardinal Bellarmin, being informed that his morals had been traduced in a libel, which had been industriously circulated, only smiled, at the same time lamenting the calumniator, and despising the calumny. Cardinal Berule, hearing that an infamous and virulent satyr had made it's appearance, exhibiting him to public view as a Heretic, a Deist and Libertine, did not discover the least emotion. The Abbé de Rancé, that illustrious Penitent, offered up the Sacrifice of the Mass for those, who published against him the most gross and abusive libels, many of which had been sent him. The Marquis Maffei had the courage to distribute, with his own hands, a work in which his character was defamed in the
most

most atrocious manner ; Pope Benedict the fourteenth wrote to him, on that occasion, a congratulatory letter, which begins with these remarkable words : “ it would not be in my power, though even I should wish, to doubt of your being a great man, since I see that envy persecutes you, and attacks even your Religion and your Morals.” What horrid calumnies have not rage and malice thrown out against the orthodoxy of the famous Muratori, and against the morals of the illustrious Fenelon, and with what patience did they not bear it ?

I know very well, that if libels are the production of dark and envious souls, people of little minds, who form by much the greatest number, read and believe them. But is it not from men of good sense, we are to hope for justice, supposing we have not Christianity enough to expect it from God alone ? and does not Reason teach us to distinguish a libel from a work dictated by

truth? it is a strange thing, says Bayle, (precisely on the article of Bellarmin,) that among so many who were seized with the frightful itch for writing satyrs, we find so few, who knew the art of poisoning them. The most of those wretched scribblers, who meddle in it, not aware, that in order to succeed, they ought to conceal their malignant passion, and avoid every appearance of animosity; otherwise their satyr has a retroactive effect. Our indignation is raised against the libel, and our attachment encreases the more for the person who is accused or calumniated. Such has been the effect produced by these works of darkness, published against Religion and against God himself, which, for upwards of half a century back, have infected the world; my hand refuses to trace those horrors, which ought to be buried in oblivion, together with their authors.

Ah! if unhappily there are still men to be found so extravagant and impious,

as to refuse the Messiah the quality of the Son of God, and to treat as an imposture his Gospel, which is truth itself, it is not surely astonishing, that through spite and envy, they should attack the birth or reputation of private individuals ; but instead of being grieved at their calumnies and invectives, we should arm ourselves with courage, and reflect that this life is only a series of injustice and misery. One cannot possess merit or fame with impunity. There are none but fools, said the Cardinal de Richelieu, that no one speaks ill of. It would be truly a deplorable case, if it depended on a common adventurer to determine the degree of esteem or contempt each person is entitled to. The sentence even of a court of judicature would be invalid, if it emanated only from one person, and yet a judge in his official capacity deserves surely much more credit than one, who writes or speaks without being sanctioned. It would be necessary, moreover, to enquire into the character and respectability of a writer, who deals in

invectives,

invectives, though, indeed, a work of that kind is a strong presumption against its author. An honest man, far from being guilty of calumny, knows not even how to detract. Such are the lessons Reason teaches us, but alas! how few attend to them!

The Scripture in telling us not to praise any man until after his death, shews clearly what little value we should set upon the opinions and encomiums of the world, both because they have generally interest and flattery for their motive, and because they are apt to corrupt the heart. Let us open to our view the immense career of eternity, and we will think but little of men, or their judgments, we will be ashamed even to let them affect us; the true Christian Philosopher acts as if there was only God and himself in the world; he pays less attention to praise or dispraise than to the humming of Bees; he is ever careful in preserving his conscience unspotted, never to give any cause of scandal,

scandal, and if he receive an injury, he leaves to God the care of avenging it. He knows that according to the doctrine of the Gospel, he ought to rejoice when calumniated and persecuted, and he really does rejoice at it.

The great Bossuet, that illustrious Prelate, who was accused by his enemies, of being married, made this wise observation, that it would be dangerous for men who are held in high repute, to hear nothing but their praises sounded; that God generally permits them to be attacked by satyrs and calumnies, which serve as a counterpoise. Hence it happens, that those who have been distinguished for their abilities, have two reputations, and people speak of them, according as they are affected. They are praised by some, and censured by others, and the more merit they possess, the more they excite envy. This barbarous persecution, I own, would almost give a disgust for the love of virtue; but we should consider, that it is for
 God

God we are to be virtuous, and not for a perverse world, which seems to delight in condemning the most holy and laudable actions, and would wish to conceal that glorious spectacle of a soul without blemish ; it would fain represent every one unjust and depraved, because it is unjust and depraved itself—the wicked attribute to others all the crimes they are guilty of themselves.

CHAPTER XIII.

ON THE LOVE OF PEACE.

WE cannot characterize peace better, than by calling her the Daughter of Reason : reflection prevents the fatal effects of anger, and renders us peaceable. Who is the man who after having examined himself, will be so rash
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as to prefer the tumult of the world, or the storm of the passions to the satisfaction of being at peace with himself, and with his neighbour? we cannot taste the sweets and tranquillity of life but in being mild and patient. The soul must enjoy a perfect calm, in order to be at liberty to contemplate herself in God, and to learn the extent of her hopes and her duties. Those turbulent spirits that are always in a state of agitation, tend only to destroy the harmony and peace of society.

There is a kind of indolence, which is sometimes mistaken for a love of peace; but Reason soon points out the difference. It belongs only to humanity to establish that happy concord, that should reign among mankind. And what inspires this humanity but serious reflection on ourselves, a knowledge of our true interests and our wants, and a desire of happiness?

Nothing is more destructive of the love of peace than a sour humour, the effervescence of the blood, and the refinement of pride ; these are the fatal sources from which originate disputes, hatred, revenge, injurious language and contempt : but Reason, if we would only listen to her advice, would cure us of these defects, or would enable us, at least, to restrain them. Is it not to her we are indebted for the bonds of society, the union of minds, politeness, complaisance and attention ? she does not, indeed, inspire sympathy, for we have it independent of all reflection ; but she engages mankind to deal with each other as if they were brethren.

The primitive Christians had but one heart and one soul, because they were the most reasonable persons that ever existed ; every thing was consistent in their belief, in their actions and in their thoughts. What a wide difference between their conduct and that of the present race of men, who live at random,

dom, or reflect, only to fret and torment themselves. Their fantastical humour, their self-sufficiency, their dissipation, their lust render them unfit for friendship or society : if people visit each other, it is neither from affection, nor from a sense of duty, but for want of employment, with a view to interest, or in order to kill time. What mean those wars, those duels, which stain the earth with human gore, those law-suits in families equally ruinous and disgraceful ; those religious feuds, those literary contests, the offspring of pride and envy ? alas ! do they not announce the total extinction of Reason ? a shadow of common sense would be sufficient to shew the extravagance, as well as the barbarity of cutting each others throats, and waging war for years together, unless when self-defence requires it ; it would shew the injustice of keeping up religious persecution and animosity, from a spirit of intollerance, so absolutely contrary to the meek spirit of the Gospel ; it would expose, in fine,

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the folly of authors making a shew of themselves to the eyes of the ignorant, who laugh at the writings and the writers, and, indeed, often with justice. What frightful scenes of horror, of violence and confusion does the world exhibit! what frenzy, what irreconcilable hatred and divisions! the husband at variance with the wife, the brother pleading against the sister, the son against the father, nothing but discord and dissention throughout all orders of society. The demon of riches seizes on the minds of men, and transports them with rage. There is no baseness or turpitude that is not exposed, no stratagem that is not devised, no art or meannesses they do not descend to, in order to gain their ends. The Courts of law continually ring with the most atrocious accusations, with the recital of the most horrid and infamous transactions. After all this, can we pretend to the title of rational beings, and call ourselves disciples of him, who recommends to give up even our coat, if they

they take our cloak, that is to surrender our right, rather than violate Charity by contentions and disputes, and who bids us not to be anxious or solicitous about the morrow.

Happy the friend of peace! ever-guided by Reason, which is grieved to see men a prey to these frightful passions of vengeance and avarice; he finds within himself the most powerful motives to maintain a good understanding with all people, he conforms himself to the different persons, ages and characters, his countenance is always open and serene, he only wishes for an opportunity to shew that his only gratification and delight, is to serve and oblige others. His conversation is insinuating and persuasive, his manners noble and engaging, in his proceedings he is active and officious, but cool and deliberate. You discover in his looks a goodness and kindness that charm you. Should any dispute or discord arise among friends, he interposes his mediation, and

and pacifies their minds. At one time animated and zealous, at another time tranquil and composed, but always affable and free, he makes friends of all those he converses with, or endeavours, at least, to gain their confidence. The proud man esteems him, because he knows how to yield; the ambitious man loves him, because he has no pretensions; the turbulent man bears with him, because he has always a command of himself; the misanthropist desires his company, because he entertains and cheers him; the man who is fond of disputing, listens to him, because he never contradicts; in fine, he contrives to bring other men's passions on the same level or tone with his own, or rather to impress on them a moderation, which is productive of the most happy effects. What a contrast between this friend of peace and that fire-brand, who insinuates himself into families, in order to sow dissention, by spreading false reports, to raise jealousy and mistrust, who forms intimacies in order to betray.

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The one is a mild and beneficent Star, that dispels the least mist, the other is a tempest, that scatters around darkness and alarms. Yet how many choleric and turbulent men, in comparison to those of a mild and placid disposition ! who take umbrage at the least word, or even gesture : demand vengeance for the smallest offence or the slightest indiscretion ; who challenge, fight and are killed for the meereft trifle, as if there was question of the conquest of the Universe.

Ah ! would they but give themselves time to reflect on the blessing of peace, and the many advantages it procures, they would conceive a horror and detestation for intrigues, cabals, false reports, and whatever else may disturb their repose and impair their health. Sicknefs often proceeds from the blood and the humours being inflamed by anger. He who knows how to enjoy and possess himself, always preserves a perfect calm and serenity of mind, he
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keeps his passions and his senses under such subjection, that without being overstrained or affected, he announces himself with a graceful air, and never advances any thing, that is not replete with Reason, and blended with mildness.

All wish for peace and consider it as the source of the wealth and prosperity of Nations, as the bond that unites and connects families together, and as the most useful and agreeable ornament of society. The tradesman sings when he enjoys peace, the husbandman cheerfully endures his toil, while he peaceably sows and reaps: in a word, deprive the world of peace, and the whole earth becomes like Courts, the residence of intrigues, cabal and envy. At the birth of our Saviour, peace was announced by Angels, as the most precious gift of Heaven; it was the legacy which Christ bequeathed to his disciples, as the certain pledge of his love; not the false
peace

peace of the world, which intoxicates the senses, extinguishes Reason, and paralyses the Soul. The peace of Heaven, the only true and solid peace, has for its basis the perfect harmony between soul and body, between Reason and faith, and a good understanding between ourselves and others : and yet how few seek to procure it. If the imagination is suffered to stray, if the thoughts and desires have not a reasonable object, adieu to peace, man becomes the sport of his own and of other men's passions.

St. Paul exhorts us to endeavour, by every means possible, to be in peace with all men. There are indeed some characters so difficult and intractable that you cannot appease them ; in such circumstances Reason recommends silence : if we consult her, she will point out to us that proper medium of neither carrying complaisance too far, nor of failing in the duties of Charity. What a peculiar happiness it is to possess a great soul, that is superior to all events ;

events ; this, indeed, is a kind of philosophy that is not much in vogue, yet it is that alone, which can render us truly happy.

The learned *Monf. Nicole* has composed an excellent treatise on the means of preserving peace with all men ; we should read it, if we wish to understand the language of Reason ; it will teach us, that it is only by patience, meekness and humility, that we can learn the art of acquiring, and constantly enjoying tranquillity ; this art is the more necessary, as, by giving way to the first emotions of passion, we become bad fathers, bad husbands, and bad masters. The crosses and contradictions of the world will throw us into perpetual broils, unless we continually endeavour to restrain our anger and gain a complete mastery over ourselves. One pays dearly for falling into passions, it does not remedy the evils we complain of, and we become a torment to ourselves and a scourge to others. The friend of
peace

peace neither disturbs or frets himself, nor wishes to cause uneasiness to others, by indiscreetly mentioning unfavourable reports. He is sensible, that in order to live peaceably, we should not know what people say of us, nor should we inform our friends of what malice or envy may report of them. Solitude is favourable to peace, we ought to cherish it, if we wish to enjoy repose: the first moments are painful, it is true, but they are soon changed into delights, which ravish the soul, and elevate it to God.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER XIV.

ON THE MEANS OF BEING HAPPY.

HOW many different ideas does the word happiness raise in the mind! though it ought to be simple, and present but one and the same object to all, it multiplies itself like a prismatical glass, into as many sorts of happiness as there are different tastes. The miser conceives no one happy but the man who is continually hoarding up; the spend-thrift places happiness in extravagance and dissipation, the ambitious man in aspiring and attaining to honours. It would seem as if happiness were a thing purely arbitrary, and that existed only in the imagination.

It is true, our felicity very much depends upon our manner of perceiving,
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ing, but independant of our perceptions, there is a real happiness, which, deriving its source from the eternal, immutable and Sovereign Good, can be no other than God himself. In vain do we attempt to stray from him, every thing recalls us to him, notwithstanding all our amusements and entertainments, notwithstanding our riches, honors, and all the enjoyments of this life, we still feel, that there exists another sort of happiness, different from those frivolous advantages; for they are not capable of satisfying the heart. This, moreover, is confirmed by the idea we conceive of the Divinity, that is, of a Being, who alone possesses in himself wherewith to fill the immense capacity of an immortal substance. Our Soul pants after eternal possessions: we only afflict and degrade her, when we confine her to other objects.

Even in the midst of dissipation and disorder, Reason presents to our eyes a ray of that essential and primitive
Beauty,

Beauty, which we would discover more clearly than the Light of the Sun, if we would but seriously reflect. That irksomeness, those disgusts which we experience, those contradictions and affronts, which mortify our pride, those unquenchable desires, which are continually reviving, are not the mere effect of chance, nor of inconstancy, but the language of Reason, that speaks within us, in order to detach us from our pleasures and enjoyments, and to bring us back to God. She studies our character, our temper and our inclinations, and when she finds a favourable opportunity of imbittering our joys, she renders this life insupportable, and makes us necessarily wish for the life to come. I know that without an extraordinary grace, she will not be able to triumph over our follies and our passions; but Reason itself, then becomes a preparatory grace, which disposes us to receive more victorious ones.

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Would we but duly attend to the dictates of Reason, all our days would be a regular succession of reflections ; each event would open to us a career, in which our soul would discover the indefectible light ; we would learn to analyze riches and honors, to strip them of that false splendor that dazzles our sight, and conceals from us their nothingness. Our passions and our senses apply, as it were, a varnish to this world, that prevents us from knowing it : what is only a spectre, appears to us under the most seducing form ; what stings us, seems to caress, what debases, seems to elevate us. Hence arises that criminal impetuosity, with which men abandon themselves inconsiderately to the most dangerous objects, hence this deafness, that prevents them from listening to Reason, or acknowledging her empire.

The Almighty in creating us (for we should always ascend to the first principles) has inspired us with the desire
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of happiness, and has furnished us with the means of attaining it. These means, which appear so very difficult and remote, are to be found within ourselves : it is a sort of natural arithmetic, which enables us, as far as we wish, to calculate all the goods of which we have any idea, and to sum up and estimate their value. By this operation we may learn what to determine on with respect to happiness ; for, in order to be happy, we must account with ourselves for the amount of our felicity : we begin by dividing, or taking asunder fortune and greatness, which are considered and coveted by all, as the greatest good, and, after having placed on one side, the dangers, the weaknesses, the prejudices, the embarrassments, that inseparably attend them, in a word, their vanity, their slavery, their frailty and uncertainty, we find but a vapour that vanishes as it rises. We may say the same with regard to birth and high station, and even, with regard to knowledge : all these advantages thrown into
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the crucible of Reason, are immediately dissolved and loose all their lustre. Were men to apply themselves to this kind of chimistry, rather than the seeking of the art of making gold, (which if discovered would be the greatest misfortune to the world) they, surely, would not be tempted to believe, that the Universe is capable of contenting a soul, which is greater than all possible worlds.

What powerful resources we find in ourselves against afflictions and adversity, when we know how to sound or examine ourselves! He who enjoys perfect health, considers himself happy, when he reflects on those who are confined to a bed of sickness; he who enjoys his liberty, casts an eye on those who are confined in prisons and dungeons, and feels himself content with his lot.

Every thing in this life is relative, and it is only by comparing and calculating,

lating, that we can know and enjoy happiness. There are certain degrees of pleasure, as well as of pain for all men, and they will be found, upon examination, to be nearly equal. The poor man, it is true, is destitute of every thing, but he often thinks better than the rich man who possesses all; those who are afflicted with sickness, suffer from the infirmity of the body, but they look to another life for that approaching consolation, which those, who are in health, have not; the tradesman lives in obscurity, but he feels himself superior to the great, by the elevation of his sentiments, like Diogenes, who preferred his Tub to the Throne of Alexander. We have a source of hopes, and even of illusions, which form here below part of our happiness. If then, we borrow our ideas of happiness from the reflections that Reason suggests, we shall infallibly render ourselves content and happy: whatever calamity may befall us, we will consider it as a cloud that passes, or as a dream that vanishes with sleep.

sleep. Moreover, in how many different ways does the imagination assist us? but unfortunately, we often employ it against ourselves, by anticipating sorrow and misfortunes, even when every thing appears favourable and prosperous. One desire is scarcely gratified, when we wish to content another, the disappointment of satisfying but one, is sufficient to discourage and deject us. In reality, we are unhappy only because we wish to be so: in order to secure our happiness, we should avoid hurry of business, law-suits and embarrassments, yet we are fond of them: we should fly courts and intrigues, yet we anxiously seek them; we should wean ourselves from sensual pleasures, which cause such anguish and remorse, yet we idolize them; we should place a distance between the world and our soul, yet we, as it were, identify them; we should be constant in the practice of virtue, and irrevocably attached to that Being, who is infinitely good, and is liable to no change or vicissitude, yet

we are continually striving to keep at a distance from him ; we should lay down for ourselves, a regular plan of life, a system of happiness independent of card-parties, plays, or entertainments, yet we live at random, abandoning ourselves and our time to the whirl-wind of the world ; we should respect and consult our Reason, we should ever be guided by its counsels ; yet we scarcely know what Reason is, or even if it exists ; we should only esteem what is immortal, yet we love nothing but fashions, vanity and deception ; in order to be content with our situation in life, we ought to compare our condition with that of the poor, who pine in misery and want, who suffer every hardship and distress, who eat their bread with the sweat of their brow, and who have not whereon to repose their head ; but we only look to the rich, to their pleasures and amusements, their splendid retinue, their superb and magnificent buildings ; in a word, we should be patient, and arm ourselves

ourselves with courage against all disasters, yet by our pusillanimity and weakness, we sink under the least affliction. Patience is a gift of Heaven, infinitely more precious than any treasure, without it no one can be happy.

It is not then in gold, in rank, fortune or favour that happiness consists, nay they are rather an obstacle to it. The great ones enjoy all these advantages, and yet their life often becomes irksome to them: the more one is incumbered with those exterior goods, the more is Reason straitened and contradicted; let libertines say what they will, it is Reason alone, that points out the true road to happiness; did it consist in a life of dissipation, that continually distracts the mind, and prevents it from attending to itself or to God; it would undoubtedly be a cruel punishment to reflect. But what sort of a life is that of a soul, delivered up to the violence and impetuosity of the passions? there is no real happiness, but

but that which we cannot loose ; but the passions are subject to decay. The philosopher Bias expressed his felicity, by glorying that he carried his all along with him ; for, our manner of perceiving and thinking, cannot be taken from us ; all then that is necessary to make us happy, is to perceive and to think well. The man who is bent down to the earth, to pick up diamonds or gold, can have no pretensions to happiness ; unless the soul exalt herself, and rise superior to the highest fortune, the imagination strays, the ideas are confused, the thoughts confounded, the desires materialised ; we become a prey to anxiety and disgust. This is what Reason tells us, and what experience proves. Enter into those vast and stately palaces resplendent with gold and marble, view those mighty men of fortune, whom adulation deifies, who see even the greatest crouching at their feet : and after you have well considered them, withdraw, and hesitate not boldly to pronounce that

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they are the most unhappy of men, unless they have Religion for the object of their hope and their support, and you will affirm the truth. I was one day conversing with a Spaniard, who at the age of 33 had made the tour of the world, I asked him, which of all the Sovereigns, or the different persons he had seen, in the course of his travels, he would rather be, in order to enjoy happiness : *a good Christian*, replied he : admirable reflection ! it is neither that of an idiot, nor of a fanatic, but of a Sage, who knows the nature of the soul, who knows that christianity is our only sure resource in all occurrences, in all our perplexities and trials, of what kind so ever they may be. Place a man in the most critical circumstances, let him be afflicted with the greatest calamities, with the most unforeseen misfortunes, and let him recur to the Gospel, he will there be sure to find a remedy for his pain ; for God who is every where, and is all powerful, can himself supply the want
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of every thing else. Woe to him, who rests for his support on an arm of flesh ! place not your confidence, nor your happiness in the princes of the earth ; how could they render you happy, since they are far from being happy themselves ?

What an abundant source of happiness for a soul that believes firmly the truths of Religion, and applying itself to the meditation of the psalms, reads therein, that the just shall never be abandoned ; that the desires of the wicked shall perish ; that the calumniator shall be confounded ; that God will quickly avenge the cause of the widow and the orphan ; that it is better to be the last in his house, than the first in the palaces of kings ; that he hears and sees every thing, whereas it was he, who formed the eye and the ear ; that in the Sun he has pitched his tabernacle ; that he knows the number of the stars, and calls them all by their names, that he made the night and the

the aurora, that his providence supports and preserves the world. These, we must confess, are sublime and magnificent ideas, whoever does not feel their beauty and energy, must be wholly ignorant of true felicity and true greatness. But the soul cannot relish them, but by making them her food, and preferring them to all the pleasures and honors of the Universe.

CHAPTER XV.

ON THE DANGERS OF INCREDULITY.

THE unbeliever without principle during life, and without resource at the hour of death, is opening for himself a gulph every step he takes. His whole being, which was created for God,

changes, in some manner, its nature and becomes a prey to error and frequently to vice. The man who is destitute of Religion, is likewise void of Reason, wandering here and there in the midst of an Universe, of which he perceives neither the cause, nor the first mover, in the midst of different kinds of worship, among which he cannot discern the true one, he knows not whether to believe or to doubt; whether to fear or to hope: unacquainted with his soul, which he does not distinguish, and with his body, which he knows not, he believes that matter is capable of thinking, and that his thoughts are the mere effect of the bile or of the blood.

All mankind are but mere automata in the eyes of the unbeliever, and consequently it would not be a greater crime to destroy them, than to dismount the springs of a watch, or to kill a dog. Thus the bonds of society, of friendship, and even consanguinity, will

will be considered only as puerilities or mere matters of ceremony ; the different forms of government, as the work of ignorance and superstition ; people will neither fear nor obey the laws, but merely through a dread of the punishments they inflict. Great God ! what horrid consequences ! Reason shudders at the thought of them, yet they naturally flow from the system of incredulity, a system that consists in admitting only a God, who is deaf and blind, or at most, totally indifferent to all that happens here below ; a system that acknowledges neither soul nor immortality ; a system that makes a jest of Religion, and considers it as a mere invention of policy and superstition ; a system, in fine, that believes those only reasonable, who believe nothing.

Let us proceed farther, and see what will become of vice and virtue under this destructive system. Alas ! incontinence or chastity, intemperance or sobriety, avarice or generosity, will be
reputed

reputed merely the effect of constitution and temper ; it will be the same thing to steal a hundred guineas, or to bestow them. If, indeed, we only acknowledge a God, who abandons the world entirely to itself, who neither rewards nor punishes ; if man has no other soul but the circulation of the blood, or the elasticity of the nerves, (which must cease) the difference between vice and virtue, can be but a silly prejudice, and men may scoff at probity and wisdom, when they can do it without risking their honor or their life.

It is true, those impious men, frightened at the dreadful consequences of this abominable doctrine, endeavour to palliate it, by telling you that honesty is independent of all Creeds and of all Religions. But what do they mean by honesty ? it is evident that they know no other, than that which is necessary to screen them from the vengeance of the laws ; in fact, they make no scruple of being fornicators, adulterers, and frequently

frequently calumniators and drunkards, refraining only, from murder or robbery ; hence we may conclude, that they would not stop at committing even these crimes, as well as every other, were it not from a dread of the severity of the law in punishing robbers and murderers. If once a man can be persuaded, that all dies with him, nothing but fear alone can make him honest, or else he is not consistent with himself. Moreover, this probity of which they so fondly boast, being material, like their thoughts, is consequently, no more to be respected, than the wheel or the hand of a watch. Reason must be grievously afflicted at the sight of such enormities : in what cruel bondage is she held, when in the custody of an unbeliever ! he confounds her, that is eternal, with the chyle or the excrements ; he smothers her, that is the organ of God himself, and listens only to his passions ; and yet, he cites her upon every occasion, not considering, that she inwardly combats his sophisms,

and

and is the most powerful support of Religion. But it is time now to undeceive thee, O blind and wretched man ! thou shalt find in thyself the most terrible argument against thy paradoxes. What then ! Reason condemns thee, she cries out against thy injustice, she demands vengeance of thee, for forcing her to speak according to thy prejudices, and thou wilt not hear her. Stop ; thy cause is already judged ; thou deservest no other title than that of a senseless dotard.

Men, at least, ought to go all-fours like the beasts of the field, when they thus renounce their Reason ; for one is really astonished to see a being with a human shape doubt of the first truths ; yet such is the extravagance of unbelievers, they reject the most generally received opinions, in order to advance without proofs, and without experience, the most strange and monstrous absurdities ; and as M. de Beaumont, Archbishop of Paris, admirably observes,

in

in a pastoral mandate, worthy to be handed down to posterity : “ with an extreme facility to adopt a multitude of the most extravagant hypotheses, they join an almost invincible repugnance to submit to the dogmas of Religion. They are credulous to an excess in admitting frivolous relations, that may afford them some contemptible objections against the Gospel ; and they refuse the most evident and sensible demonstrations of the facts of revelation. They are eternally boasting of probity, moderation, humanity and beneficence ; and by endeavouring to overturn the principles of Religion, they are sapping the foundation of all these virtues. They cry out against those barbarous times, when philosophy contented itself with vague terms without ideas, with expressions without an object ; and they admit systems in which the wildest chimeras are substituted, in place of the most incontestable truths. Incredulity then is only a chain of precipices ; in rising out of one, you fall into another.

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Can there be a greater misfortune than to deny the Creator who made us, or to form to ourselves such an idea of him, as strips him of his most glorious and essential attributes. The unbeliever interrupts this admirable commerce which should subsist between God and Man.— We are, then, but weak desolate beings, deprived of all means of consolation in our misfortunes, or of any hope of a better life, should we be miserable in this. The prayers that the poor address to Heaven, are impotent and useless ; and every desire of eternity is but the effect of a heated imagination. O rage ! O despair ! come and take possession of me, if this doctrine be true ; I can no longer endure ; the world now appears to me as a frightful desert, and my fatal existence as a cruel gift.

But the unbeliever is not only guilty of the most atrocious of crimes against God, and against himself ; he is also a declared enemy against the state, his pernicious writings and discourses directly

rectly tend to subvert the order and peace of society. He snatches from the wretched the consolation of hope ; he takes from the rulers their authority, and from the subject that filial and religious submission to the laws, which springs from the desire of accomplishing the will of God. Nay more, he forms reprobates, he arms them with daggers and with poison, to employ them as occasion may serve. Ah ! when people come to such a pitch of depravity, they swallow crimes like water ; the father or the master cannot sleep with safety under the same roof with his servant or his child..

Such are the dreadful misfortunes that Reason represents as the necessary consequences of incredulity. But alas ! what becomes of the unbeliever when death begins to approach with rapid strides, and comes to execute the order of the Almighty ? then, struck with an additional blindness, which St. Augustine calls the chastisement of the impious, he persists in affecting neither to fear nor to hope.

hope. Ah ! what a horrible state ! or, if terrified at the sight of his deplorable condition, he should make an effort to return to God ; how will it be possible for him ? since all the prayers of the Church, even the most consoling, which are read for the dying Christian, depose against the unbeliever, who is on the point of expiring. The Church beseeches God to shew mercy to the sinner who invokes him, as one, who had believed and professed the mystery of the most Holy Trinity, but the unbeliever made it his business during his whole life, to deny and ridicule it. The Church beseeches the Lord to pardon a soul that has been ransomed by his blood, but the unbeliever has not ceased to blaspheme against the mystery of our redemption. The Church beseeches God to open Heaven in virtue of the merits of Jesus Christ ; but the unbeliever has always represented Christ as a mere man, whom folly and superstition had deified.

Thus the unbeliever, without resource at the hour of death, and destitute of principle

principle during life, sees himself surrounded on all sides with perils, horror and dismay. He is engaged in the midst of shelves and quick-sands, and at length he meets with one, that opens to him the stores of divine vengeance. Senseless men may consider all this as the effect of panic fear, or mere declamation ; but the rational man, who seeks truth, and draws it from its source, will acknowledge the reality of these misfortunes and shudder at them.

CHAPTER XVI.

ON THE ADVANTAGES OF CHRISTIANITY.

THE grandest and most beautiful sight the world ever exhibited, was undoubtedly the establishment of the Christian Religion. Paganism lost its idols, philosophy was stripped of its sophisms, people's

people's morals, 'till then, corrupt and barbarous, became gentle and innocent: Vanity no longer continued to govern the world, nor superstition to dictate laws ; ambition was no longer the main spring of men's actions. Truth in all its lustre, obedience, disinterestedness and self-denial took possession of the hearts and minds of all, and established a new empire on the ruins of the passions and the senses. The Aurora, which each morning comes to dispel the darkness in which night envelopes the world, and to restore its light, represents to us the first dawn of our holy Religion. The clouds of ignorance that overspread the mind were dispersed, doubts ceased, and man enlightened and guided in the paths of virtue, advanced rapidly towards the sovereign Good. It is to Christianity we are indebted for the knowledge of these infallible mysteries. that exercise our faith, and this luminous morality that directs and sanctifies our actions. It is Christianity has ennobled, elevated and spiritualised our nature, so that we are no longer

longer those carnal men bent down to the earth, and confounded with the other animals, but sublime, radiant beings, who assert their claim to immortality.

Here I behold Reason breaking out into the most lively expressions of gratitude and proclaiming aloud, that it is only since the birth of Christianity she has become respectable, and has made a right use of her prerogative. Like the sun in his career, Christianity has dispelled the mists and vapours that obscured Reason, and enables her to penetrate into the sanctuary of the most high; no longer wandering at the will of the senses and desires, in search of a superstitious and arbitrary worship, that flatters ignorance and the passions, but firmly settled in the knowledge and love of truth, she has perfectly distinguished good from evil, and has been enlarged and elevated in proportion as God has been pleased to manifest himself. This contrast which appears so striking between Reason plunged into all the horrors of Idolatry. and
Reason

Reason illumined by the light of Faith, discovers at once, the advantages of our holy Religion. Man become Christian, was restored to himself and to God, and seemed to partake of the nature of Angels, and to be all on a sudden, a Citizen of Heaven ; his ideas became sublime, his desires heavenly, his senses docile, his passions reasonable, and even his body has been spiritualised by the practice of mortification, continence and sobriety.

The true Christian is a man of all places and of all times, he has neither limits nor moments to confine or stop him. He enjoys the liberty of the children of God ; he dreads neither tyrants nor adversity ; he is equally indifferent to praise and to contempt ; he esteems no greatness but that of being immortal ; he acts when alone, as if he had all mankind for witness, because he is virtuous from principle ; he is constantly employed in serving and assisting his brethren, yet considers himself an unprofitable servant, he neither eats, drinks nor breathes
but

but for the glory of God ; he conceals himself to do good, as others do, to commit evil, fearing even the shadow of self-love ; he is a stranger to contradiction and strife, to jealousy and ill-humour ; in a word, true citizen, true parent, true friend he appears entirely devoted to mankind, yet he is wholly devoted to God. Far from being afflicted at old age or infirmity, he considers them as the prelude to death, and looks on death itself as the dawn of true felicity.

Is this the man, who has been formed in the Capitol or the Areopagus ? have the Greeks and Romans, wonderful as they may appear, ever produced personages so perfect ? the love of a chimerical and vain glory corrupted all their actions, their shameful and criminal abuse of their Reason, in professing an extravagant and superstitious worship, clearly shews, that it was reserved for the Christian Religion alone, to enlighten and satisfy immortal souls. If any doubt still remain, let us view the portrait of a true Christian
 sketched

scetched by a famous author of these times, “ represent to yourself, says he, all the duties that can possibly be prescribed for the good of society, recall to your mind all the principles of justice, sum up, under one idea, all the virtues, you will find all united in the heart of a good Christian. If he be a King, he will govern with wisdom ; if a Judge, he will decide with equity ; if a Soldier, he will fight with valour ; if a Father, he will command with affection ; if a Husband, he will love with tenderness ; if a Friend, he will serve with disinterested zeal ; if a Servant, he will obey with fidelity ; if rich, he will give liberally ; if poor, he will suffer without repining ; if high in power and credit, he will employ his interest to assist others ; he will pardon offences, and resist corruption : faithful in his promises, cautious and circumspect in his conduct and discourse, modest in prosperity, resigned and tranquil in adversity, patient in suffering, he feels only for the sufferings of others, honouring merit, even in his enemies, loving good,

and

and condemning evil wherever he meets it, severe when necessary, mild and affable in season, of all these virtues he will possess what is solid and true. It is not for the sake of the admiration and applause of men, that he is virtuous, but for the sake of him alone, who is the author of all justice and of all sanctity.—Propose to him an act of injustice, a prevarication against truth or a deviation from duty, and you will then see whether he is capable of firmness and courage. None but the most dastardly can accuse the true Christian of cowardice. The evangelical man all in God, and all for God, generously devotes himself to the service of his brethren, nor is he ever disheartened either by dangers or difficulties. All nature is not capable of shaking his resolution, or depriving him of his vigour: the destruction of the whole world, far from alarming him, would rather be to him a subject of consolation, in the hope of going to enjoy the Sovereign Good.”

What have we to add to these traits, only to observe, that those impious writers who dare to asperse and degrade the Christian Religion, to represent it as alienating the mind and enervating the heart, are no better than idiots. What people have ever displayed more zeal for their country, more valour in the field, more Reason in their conduct, than the Christians have done? is it not in the sacred writings that the true idea of wars and of conquerors is to be found? is it not there we behold with admiration the courage of a Judas Macchabeus; of an Eleazar, of a David? is it not there one may learn how to employ open force or stratagem, in order to defeat the enemies of the state? is it not there we discover instances of a magnanimity that dreads neither dangers nor death? is it not there we read, even of women, such as a Debora, a Judith and a Jael, who give proofs of the greatest intrepidity?

What history can produce so many real Heroes as that of the Church? the Emperors

perors, after having been glutted, during three centuries, with the blood of the Christians, were at length driven to despair at seeing the courage and constancy of the martyrs. Mothers with their children, weak and tender virgins faced fire and sword without dismay, and expired, singing hymns of joy, in the midst of tortures, at the bare recital of which nature shudders. Tertullien, in his apology for the Christians, (whom he mentions as crowding the court and filling the ranks) defies their adversaries to convict them of cowardice or treachery. Plynny, though a courtier, writes to the Emperor Trajan in favour of the Christians, and only accuses them of superstition.

But what need have we to seek in the annals of history for testimonies in favor of Christianity, when Reason, that is capable of examining, weighing and estimating its value acknowledges at once the sublimity, the grandeur and the necessity of the Christian Religion. The

true Christian is interiorly virtuous, but he who is not a Christian, is either a hypocrite, or superstitious. The threat of eternal punishment, which it holds out to the wicked, far from enervating the mind, as its enemies pretend, is the most powerful incentive to excite mankind to fulfil their duties. When we dread a great misfortune, don't we take every precaution to guard against it? and does not religion denounce punishment in the next life, against the soldier who fails in courage or zeal in the service of his country? moreover, what impression can the fear of death make on men, who consider their body as a frail vessel of clay that is easily broken, who despise the fleeting figure of this world, and fear only what can injure the soul. It is evident then, that the true Christian cannot be a coward. If Christianity extinguished valour, the Constantines, the Charlemagnes, the the Conde's, the Turennes would then, have been destitute of courage, and their names should be erased from the list of Heroes.

It is thus people give into the grossest errors and absurdities when once they pass the bounds of Reason and Religion, which are both necessarily connected with each other. That spirit of intolerance, with which its adversaries reproach Christianity, not interfering with the civil jurisdiction, but relating merely to spiritual matters, cannot, in any manner, injure the state. This very rigorism, with which they charge the Catholic Church, for her condemning other Religions, and which they represent as fanaticism, proves beyond a doubt, that the Gospel is from God, and that it does not belong to men to alter or modify its doctrine, that this church, in order to maintain her ground, has no need of the arts and contrivances, which human policy is obliged to resort to : founded on the express and repeated promises of Christ, she is convinced of her own indefectibility, and declares all who are separated from her, to be out of the true faith, and consequently out of the way of salvation, (unless excused by invincible ignorance.)

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The Gospel declares, that as there is but one God, and one baptism, so there is but one true faith ; and that without this true faith, it is impossible to please God.

Such are the inductions Reason draws from this intolerance, which its adversaries object to the Catholic Church : human policy is not the Religion, which is to save us ; and were we to speak conformably to the views of this world, we would prove ourselves unworthy of being reckoned among those immortal men, to whom God has promised *another earth* and *another Heaven*. How Reason grieves to see a soul, that was created to enjoy the plenitude of the Divinity, its element, and its life, forfeit for some paltry interest, the immense advantages that Religion promises ! What ! tho' even, we should suffer, for her sake, some temporary loss, would it not be folly in the extreme, to prefer any temporal consideration or emolument to our eternal welfare ? this universe was not destined to
constitute

constitute our happiness nor our last end : We have not the property, but merely the use of it, for a few days ; and notwithstanding we think, we speak, and we act, as if we were only born for this wretched life, which should no more engage our attention than the sight of a flower, that blooms and pleases the eye for a moment, and withers the next.—Eternity will soon commence, and what will it then avail a man, to have gained the whole world, with all its treasures and enjoyments, should he be so unfortunate as to lose his soul. Is this miserable earth to be for ever, set up in competition with Heaven ? the body for ever, in opposition to the mind ? and the world to be preferred to the Gospel ? a convincing proof, that mankind but little attend to truth, and are deaf to the voice of Reason. They act, as if they were eternal here below, and they think, as if they had nothing to expect after this life but annihilation.

It is a great error to imagine, that without religion, a state could be happy or could even subsist. One must be little acquainted with the human heart, and still less with the nature of the soul (whose chief and constant motives of action are fear and love) to suppose that Religion is not necessary, and that it is only a mere political contrivance, which might absolutely be dispensed with. People, rather than live without any religious worship, would fly to the woods to consecrate trees and convert them into Gods ; and thus Idolatry, that is to say, superstition and the barbarous manners of former times, would again take place.

That a whole nation could remain Deists, would be morally impossible. This pretended Religion, which is the destruction of all others, would be in perpetual contradiction with hearts created to love, and to manifest their love ; and hence we find no country, where Deism, such as our modern philosophers would wish to introduce, has ever been
 universally

universally adopted : the Mussulman believes in a revelation, and admits a worship. Moreover, how could a society of Deists be distinguished, whereas they shew no exterior mark of their belief ? they would live in the same manner as Atheists, or we should rather say, like the brute beasts.

But let us for a moment suppose, that Christianity should, all on a sudden, be extinguished in the world, and that mankind, abandoned to their passions, should lose all idea of eternal happiness or misery ; what could restrain their vicious desires, when they could evade public notice and escape punishment ? what would prevent them from robbing, poisoning and committing murder ? Whoever knows the powerful ascendancy of religion over the conscience and the hearts of men, would not venture to intrust his purse, and much less his life, to a servant, who would declare himself an unbeliever. In vain do our Deistical writers pretend, that people

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would practice virtue for the mere honor of being virtuous, the notion of virtue detached from Religion, is but a phantom or rather a prejudice. There are no true friends, true citizens, nor true heroes to be found but among those who profess a Religion, that has for its basis the immortality of the soul, and who adore a God, who rewards and punishes. They may tell us perhaps, that Deism does not exclude future rewards or punishments ; if so, then, let the Deists be consistent with themselves ; for they teach, that God makes no account of our actions, and that no act of ours can offend him. How, after that, can they say, they admit an eternity of happiness or misery ?

These reflections are not the result of subtle or refined metaphysics, nor the offspring of fanaticism ; Reason alone is sufficient to convince us, that there is no real probity without Religion, and that the Christian Religion differs widely from all others, whereas it alone, acting
immediately

immediately on the heart, and regulating the thoughts and desires, renders men interiorly honest and virtuous. What perfect security would there be in the commerce of life, if all were truly Christians! there would then be neither lying, nor frauds, nor treachery, nor vengeance; men would carry on their dealings with each other without fear, uneasiness or suspicion. Each person having God only in view, and eternity for his object, would for conscience sake, be more exact and circumspect, than if his conduct were exposed to the view of the whole world.

Is it the fault of Christianity, if men immersed in flesh and blood and blinded by their passions, have profaned this sacred Name, and have made it the instrument of their hypocrisy, their ambition and their fury? It is only what is good, that is liable to abuse. In order then, to form a just and true idea of Christianity, we should judge of it, not by the conduct
of.

of false Christians, but by what it prescribes and inculcates.

To pardon our enemies, to return good for evil, to pray for those who persecute and calumniate us, to preserve our morals pure and innocent, to respect and obey the laws, and those who are constituted in power, to renounce our own will, to despise the world and all its fleeting vanities, to keep our minds and hearts fixed on Heaven, to adore in all things a providence, and to submit to all its dispensations, to watch continually over our words, our desires and our thoughts, to fear God alone, and put all our hope in him, are these dispositions that can be hurtful to the state, or injurious to society? Ah! whoever would presume to say so, must have lost all idea of Reason and humanity.

What tho' some hypocrites may be found, who wish to be remarked for their exterior devotions, or ignorant devotees who imagine there is more
merit

merit in complying with certain forms or ceremonies, than in the exercise of good works, who think that provided they carry about them a relick or a Scapular*, their salvation is insured; but laying aside all prejudice or partiality, let me ask, do these abuses, however blamable and absurd, endanger in any manner, the public safety. What then, if a poor simple woman says her beads, or has a particular veneration for the image of a saint, is that a matter of great consequence to the state? It is undoubtedly much more to be feared, that the woman, who is without Religion, and without modesty, giving way to the violence of her passions, may be perverted *from principle*; for then, becoming a bad wife, and a bad mother, she will become the ruin of her house and family, and a disgrace to her country.

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* *The Author does not here mean to condemn those pious practices, which tend to promote devotion, particularly, such as are sanctioned by the Church; he alludes only to the abuse of them.*

“It is a much less evil, says the famous Montesquieu, that people should sometimes abuse of Religion, than that there should be no Religion among mankind. “Christianity, adds the same author; which seems to have no other object than the next life, renders us happy even in this. It makes tyrants less timid, and consequently less cruel; in proportion as it has spread itself, the severity of despotism has been mitigated, because that meekness, which is so strenuously recommended in the Gospel, is directly opposite to tyranny and oppression.”

It is thus this true Philosopher pulverises by his judicious reflections, those little sophists, who dare to attack Religion as contrary to the happiness and prosperity of the state. But why don't they quit these countries, which they see thus infected with Christianity? then, indeed, they would shew some consistency, in leaving us to enjoy in peace, the consolation of the Gospel, in the hope of the ineffable blessings it promises us.

Or

Or if they think they ought to remain among us, in order to enlighten the people and render them more virtuous, we would beg leave to ask them, what lights, what virtues they would give them in exchange for their Religion, or with what face they can presume to preach against Christianity, whilst they themselves accuse the Ministers of the Gospel as enemies of tolerance, and disturbers of the peace of society.

One error generally leads to another, when once a man quits the path of truth; he walks in darkness and in the midst of precipices; he begins by taking a disgust for certain exercises of Religion, under pretence that they are not essential. he afterwards takes it into his head, that they border on superstition, at length he hesitates, he doubts, and ends by railing at them, and believing nothing. It is the rallery and invectives, and not the arguments of libertines, that often disconcert weak Christians, and extinguish their faith. We live in an age that is
 singularly

singularly delicate, one is more afraid of ridicule than of vice : but how plentifully it is bestowed on any person, who attempts to write or speak in favour of Religion !

Must it not appear a matter of astonishment, that one is now obliged to make the apology of Christianity, to Christians themselves, and that one is liable to be brought to an account for being pious and religious, as for being dishonest ? what a lamentable proof of the degeneracy of the times !

O ! you, who have thus rebelled against Religion, if you regard the age in which you live, if you have any love for your country, spare them the disgrace which by your profligate conduct, you are about to bring upon them. Is it not enough to have squandered twenty or thirty years of that life, which was destined by your Creator, as a time of trial, to acquire a claim to Heaven ? do you wish, then, to consummate your
iniquity

iniquity, by dying in as frightful a manner as you have lived? It is neither through hatred nor contempt that we reproach you with your incredulity. Woe to him who loves not his brethren, of whatever persuasion they may be. Charity, which is the life and soul of Christianity, has nothing else in view but your return into the bosom of that Church, whose children you become the moment of your birth. There is no true Catholic who does not sincerely love you, notwithstanding your errors and your crimes, and who would not loudly condemn as fanatics, those who would wish you the least injury. Should the spirit of party, for where, alas! is it not to be found? make use of personalities to attack you, it is a spirit that every good Christian reprobates and detests.

Listen then to what Reason tells you, and you will soon believe what revelation teaches. The language of the world and the passions is not the language of Reason. Enter into your soul, from
which

which the pleasures and dissipation of the world have estranged you, and you will learn that we act like men, only when we fulfil our duties towards God, and that God wishes to be served in spirit and in truth. If ever the Christian Religion has taught you any evil, declare it boldly to the world ; but if it has taught you only good, let it by your glory to practise it. It is honourable to change our course, when we turn away from the road of perdition ; when we renounce falsehood, to embrace truth.

These are the counsels of Wisdom, whose expressions I have borrowed ; but will they be attended to ? Ah ! is it not much to be feared that the world, increasing daily in irreligion and in malice, will be suddenly surprized with that general apostacy, of which St. Paul speaks. Already the falling off from the faith, which proceeds from a spirit of revolt and of curiosity, has caused the ruin of many Christians, and right Reason is represented as folly by those, who

who give themselves for the greatest
sages and the luminaries of the age.

CHAPTER XVII.

ON THE DESIRE OF DEATH.

THE Soul has no other centre but eternity. Every thing calls her back to this great object : her weariness, her disgusts, her desires, her hopes, her projects cause her an impatience and uneasiness, which prove that it is only in God she can find true repose.

But let us listen to Reason in the midst of all those evils that surround us, and let us weigh well what she says to us on the subject : this is her language.—
You are only here below in a place of
exile ;

exile ; your eyes were given you to look up continually to Heaven, your true country. The misfortunes and the passions of which you complain, are so many graces that God bestows on you, in order to disgust you with the world and with yourselves. This world is only a theatre, where generations appear and disappear, almost at the same instant, but the curtain will not be raised 'till the moment you are to enter into the abodes of glory and repose. Whatever you say or do, that has not a relation to this grand object, is of no more use or solidity than a spider's web. Your riches, your titles, your honors, your pleasures, your projects, being entirely foreign to yourselves, far from satisfying and filling the heart, rather encrease its desires and its wants. Can we be deaf to a voice so powerful and persuasive ? Should it not sound in our ears like a peal of thunder, and snatch us all at once, from the world and its follies ? yet scarcely has it the effect of a faint echo, of which we hear but the last syllable. We render ourselves

selves unhappy by indulging our desires, because we desire only, what may remove us from Death : we do not reflect that this last term, in closing our eyes, is to open to us the *eternal gates* ; and the more the sepulchre, that awaits us, appears filled with horror and infection, the more august and luminous will be the happy abodes of glory, that the souls of the just are to inhabit.

Those gross and material ideas, by which we are incessantly affected, are the cause of this deplorable lethargy in which we languish. Men who are merely carnal and wholly attached to this world, and who take delight in being so, are shocked at the thought of being deprived of their riches, their honors and their friends : they cannot conceive that their souls exist only for God ; and that whoever possesses him, is immensely rich and powerful. Hence Death appears to them as an object the most hideous, and instead of desiring it as a blessing, they dread it as the greatest of calamities. If it were
the

the guilt of their conscience that alarmed them, that would be a reasonable and salutary fear ; but it is merely their regret at quitting a world they idolised. Ah ! what very different ideas does Reason inspire ? She places us in some measure, face to face with God himself, and discovers to us a glimpse of that splendor, and those ineffable delights, which the saints enjoy in the heavenly Jerusalem. The Christian Philosophers supported with regret the weight of a corruptible body, and ardently wished *to be dissolved and to be with Christ*, because they were reasonable ; and we, because we are infatuated, imagine that this wretched mass of flesh forms our whole being and our immensity. In vain does our imagination open to our intellectual view an extent of infinite space, and transport us beyond the seas and the Heavens, we still keep the soul captive and dependent on the most trifling object. Ah ! how wonderful and sublime is a soul that desires Death ! she looks down with contempt and pity
on

on all the thrones of the universe, and in a transport, which is neither the effect of fanaticism nor enthusiasm, she acknowledges God alone, to be capable of fixing and satisfying her heart. She forgets all those enchanting objects that captivate the senses, and inflame the passions; she needs but herself to perceive and to know; the only subject of her joy, her only delight is the contemplation of that beauty which never fades. She eagerly desires and anticipates by her just impatience, the happy moment, when she is to be admitted to the full enjoyment of the sovereign good.

How Reason must lament, that these sentiments, which ought to be common to all men, are considered as mere chimeras and visions! and indeed Reason cannot enjoy true liberty, but with those, who really wish for Death, as the exaltation of the soul, and the humiliation of the body. To dread that moment, which is to unite us to God, would be rendering our being subservient

to vanity and falsehood. Would a person be afflicted at going to see a father, a benefactor, a friend, or at taking possession of a kingdom? and yet we lament those that dye, and wish a long life to ourselves and others, as if it were the summit of our happiness.

But let us impartially consider, what is this life with which we are so much enamoured : are those smiles that accompany it, as sincere as people imagine? or can they counterbalance all the embarrassments and cares that perplex us? not a day or perhaps an hour passes over, that our imagination is not contriving something to disturb our repose, or that we do not feel some uneasiness or affliction of mind. If we are not tormented with pains, our wants annoy us; if contradictions and crosses do not molest us, we are overwhelmed with business; if we do not suffer from indigence, our riches are a burden to us; if the world does not importune us, solitude renders us sad and melancholy; if not enslaved
by

by the passions, we are tormented with scruples. In a word, perplexed by our relations, our friends and ourselves, we are forced at length to wish to see the end of our misery, and the beginning of a more tranquil and happy life.

What a mountain of solicitude and misfortunes between our cradle and the grave ! a mountain which the imagination ceases not to magnify, and which we always discover more or less, even in the midst of feasts and enjoyments. These two wills, which are perpetually at variance with each other ; this continual war between the soul and body, the one endeavouring to gain the ascendancy over the other ; these passions that are always endeavouring to silence Reason, produce such a confused chaos that Death alone can reduce to order, by restoring us to God.

I will then wish for thee, O precious Death, if I am truly reasonable, and will consider thee as the perfection of my
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being, and the triumph of human nature. The rich, the great, the voluptuary, or our fashionable wits, may, in vain, tell me, thou art only an object of horror, or a mere nothing; I will deplore their errors, and will invoke thee, not from despair, but from reflection and from inclination; for thy visit will be the harbinger of my felicity, the joy of my thoughts and the plenitude of my life. I am in a constant state of suffering here below, walking in the midst of thorns and brambles, groaning under the weight of a flesh that oppresses me, and sighing after so many relatives and friends that I have seen depart this life: but when thou shalt come to break down the wall of separation, and restore me to God and my true country, the happy abode of justice and peace, then will my desires be immovably fixed in the centre of happiness, then will I become, immutable, immense, and even, a *partaker of the divine nature*. But what do I perceive? already all the powers of my soul are shaken, my body forsakes me, the earth vanishes, the sun disappears,

disappears, I am suddenly surrounded with the light of Heaven, I am no longer that carnal man, who before crawled in the dust, but am become a pure and sublime spirit, I have already seen that God face to face, whom before I adored by faith, I have fully discovered the truth of the sacred writings. My Reason now, intimately united to the supreme Being, participates in his power, his wisdom and his immensity. It is thus faith discovers to us what is to happen to the good Christian at the moment he expires.

But it is not in this manner people in general consider or desire Death. Those who wish for it, imagine that its only advantage is to put an end to their misery. Hence you frequently hear these absurd expressions, so frequently used on the occasion of a person dying : *it is happy for him, his sufferings are now at an end.* How can rational Beings and Christians presume to express themselves thus ? have we then, stifled that interior

voice, which incessantly warns us of our immortality. Have we renounced our Religion, which teaches us, that death is what consummates the misfortunes of many? we should be well persuaded that it is only after being stripped of our corruptible bodies, that we shall be qualified to enjoy true life.

The Pagans, who were guided only by the light of Reason, loudly professed their belief of the Dogma of immortality, and gloried in desiring Death, that they might be re-united with the supreme Being; with this conviction they have been seen to expire with the greatest composure and tranquillity, pronouncing discourses on the greatness of the soul and its future destiny. They inwardly felt, that it is the faculty of thinking that distinguishes us as men, and that thought, being purely spiritual, and continually seeking to take its flight beyond this material world, ought necessarily to survive the body.

Is it then, a matter of such wonder, to desire that which is to render us supremely happy, which is to free us from our misery, and release us from this earthly prison? it is surely much more to be wondered at, that men should suffer their thoughts and their attention to be wholly engrossed by this transitory life, as if it were to last for ever, and to see them basely enslaved to false and imaginary goods, which only cause uneasiness and remorse, and which vanish like the dream of a night, leaving their hearts and their hands empty. Let time take its course, and, if there remain any doubt, it will soon convince us, that all our projects are but vanity and folly, and that he alone is truly wise, who attaches himself to what will never perish. The frequent thought and desire of Death is the means to render Death propitious, and to avoid the dreadful punishment of the wicked. In reality, we find that none but irreligious men would wish never to die, or such as are stupid enough to believe in annihilation. Reason revolts and cries

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out against them : I here only trace what she dictates.

It is true, the aspect of a tomb presents nothing but what is horrible and frightful to nature, and seems to be the limit of our existence ; but does not Reason and our inward feeling convince us, that thought is immortal, and that our desires are too vast and immense to be confined to this miserable life ; that God himself would have failed in his own work, if in giving us these strong desires this longing after immortality, he had not created us immortal ? none but stupid senseless men judge of things merely by the outward appearances.

Yes, my Reason, thou lookest forward with confidence to Death as that happy moment, when thou shalt be freed from the annoyance of the passions, and those clouds, which now obscure thy lustre. It is because we do not listen to thy voice, that we wish to prolong our exile ; we confound thee with our earthly affections :

ons : how elevated, how luminous wilt thou become, when disengaged from this burden of earth, that weighs thee down, thou shalt experience the immediate impression of God himself, who now enlightens and inspires thee !

Ah ! why would not Reason wish for death, whereas at that instant, all she has told us of the other life, will be realised ; whereas she will then return to her source, and will find those lights she desires and those goods she so eagerly seeks ; in a word, she will possess that Being who is infinitely powerful and infinitely good. This earth is an incommodious place of residence for Reason ; she sees nothing but actions that degrade her, she hears nothing but discourses that oppose and contradict her, she reads nothing but writings that debase her : but in Heaven, she will be in her centre, her faculties will be as much enlarged there, as they are confined here below.

CHAPTER XVIII.

ON THE ABUSE OF PHILOSOPHY.

EVERY age has produced some singular men, who by cabal and the love of what is marvellous, have been held up as philosophers ; but it was reserved for our times to exhibit a certain brilliancy of wit, which is neither good sense nor genius, and to insist upon making this the rule of our morals and our faith. An ardent imagination for creating systems and paradoxes ; a taste for novelty, which appears even, in the expression and the style, a proud ignorance, that flatly contradicts the inward conviction and belief of all ages, a monstrous impiety, which attacks God himself, and endeavours to overturn his altars ; a tone of irony and contempt, which serves as
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an answer to all objections : behold what has been substituted for the erudition of the antients, and what procures the advantage of becoming philosophers, at the age of twenty. Neither the testimony of Plato, who professed his belief of the immortality of the soul, nor of Seneca, who acknowledged a Providence, is sufficient to silence our unbelievers ; they assert that the soul is only a part of the body, that they are both one and the same substance, that God does not vouchsafe to concern himself about the actions of men nor about the world ; and they give these bare assertions for evident demonstrations.

But what monstrous errors ! Should they not excite all our horror and indignation, or rather all our pity ? it is only by the abuse of Reason, that men presume now-a-days to usurp the title of philosophers ; as in dishonoring the age, by an unaccountable frenzy and delirium, and they pretend, by the most fantastical productions, to render it illustrious. Have we then eyes, or do we know how

to make use of them ? I do not mean to detail here all the absurdities, that the spirit of novelty has brought forth in these latter times ; I would fear lest I might exasperate the reader, and excite his hatred against his cotemporaries. It is sufficient to know, that those *luminaries* of the present age have imagined, that it was a *wonderful thing* to teach men to believe nothing, and to hope for nothing beyond the grave, to confound vice with virtue, and to put themselves on a level with the reptile and the insect. It is sufficient to know, that they repute a man a hypocrite or an idiot, who professes a religious worship, and that, even among Christians, it is considered a weakness to declare one self a Christian, and to adopt the maxims of the Gospel. Are we really awake, or rather are we not like persons who walk in their sleep, and who act and speak without knowing what they say or do ?

True philosophers are divine and spiritual men, who esteem nothing but their
soul,

soul, whose hearts and thoughts are continually fixed on the Supreme Being, from whom alone they expect real happiness; they adopt and faithfully observe that worship, which he has prescribed, they submit with docility to the infallible authority of that Church, which he has established, and carefully guard against all innovations or suspected opinions concerning faith. They are good citizens, good friends, good parents, in a word, they are good Christians; far from disturbing the state by their writings or discourses, they shew the example of silence, of respect and submission to the laws. They never speak but to announce the truth, they never write anything to the prejudice of Religion, of morals or of their neighbour. Sublime in their thoughts, simple in their expressions, consistent and uniform in their actions, they observe a conduct that does honour to human nature.

Strangers to ambition, to cabals and intrigue, they do not court public fa-

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vour or applause ; they refrain from complaints, from detraction and from disputes. Wisdom is their glory, study their delight, peace their treasure, Heaven the sole object of their ambition, and a good conscience their joy and their felicity. If persecuted and oppressed by injustice, they suppose they must have deserved it; if outraged and calumniated, they rejoice ; if afflicted with sickness, they receive it as the warning of death and the forerunner of the life to come. Far from proclaiming to the world their probity, as those are apt to do, who are destitute of any, they content themselves with fulfilling scrupulously all their duties ; attentive, not to the world, but to themselves, not to this life, but to eternity, they dread neither the revolutions of time, nor the caprice of fortune. Unaffected in their manners, and without ostentation in their actions, they appear singular only, because they shew candour in a world that is made up of duplicity and deceit. Their proselytes, if they are so fortunate to gain any, are
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not their disciples, but the disciples of virtue ; they are satisfied to be forgotten themselves, provided that truth prevail.

If those, who affirm that philosophers were never dangerous to the state, understand by philosophers such men as we have just described, their assertion is undoubtedly true. But how wide the difference ! the philosophers they boast of, are an Epicure, a Celsus, a Porphyry, a Hobbs, a Spinoza, that is to say, those dangerous mad-men who have advanced the most extravagant and unheard of paradoxes, and whose trite objections have been revived by the unbelievers of our times ; they mean by philosophers, those rash and impious men, who have attempted to strip the world of its dependance, the soul of its immortality, and God himself of his most essential attributes ; they mean those pernicious doctors of falsehood, who have endeavoured to destroy all religious worship, and to leave mankind a prey to their passions, and to all the horrors of impiety ;

ty ; they mean, in fine, those proud and rebellious men, who, declaring Religion to be the mere effect of policy or prejudice, would wish to level, together with the altars, all established governments and reduce the whole world to a state of universal anarchy.

Let them not, then presume to say, that philosophers have never done harm; both Reason and experience assert the contrary. Even Socrates himself, whom our modern sages represent almost as a deity, was not altogether free from blemish. He is, no doubt, intitled to praise, for having professed the Unity of God, but, though he is cried up as the martyr of truth, did he not betray, at his death, a criminal weakness, in contradicting his belief by an idolatrous sacrifice ? do we not discover in him that arrogance and pride, so common to philosophers ? at the same time that they idolise themselves, they look down with contempt on the rest of mankind.

True philosophy is the pure unadulterated language of Reason ; but how many unreasonable persons do we find among those, who are called philosophers? there are some of these pretended sages, who are more vulgar than the common people, though they seem to consider themselves of a superior order of beings, who set themselves up for men of genius, building new paradoxes on old hypotheses; and afterwards announcing themselves as the interpreters of nature and of God; in fine, as the oracles of the age. Gallily advanced simply, that the earth turns round the sun, and that the sun remains immovable, and forth-with, a swarm of pretenders to science start up, who peremptorily affirm, that all the planets are inhabited, that the earth being much smaller than we imagined, we should consider mankind but as atoms, and believe, that God pays no attention to their actions nor their thoughts. Locke appeared, and, from want of due reflection, happened to say, *who knows whether matter may not be capable of thinking?*

thinking? and immediately our refined wits, who declared themselves his disciples, and abettors of his doctrine, maintained that matter does think. It is thus philosophy serves to foment the passions and prejudice ; and thus Reason is held captive, and the world goes on heaping paradoxes on paradoxes, it is thus, in fine, that a mere supposition, or an expression dropt inadvertantly has given room to a thousand absurdities.

In order then, to merit the title of philosopher, it is not enough to imagine new systems : for who is there that is not capable of such imaginations ! when men have only their own visions to advance as proofs of what we are to believe or teach, they are not qualified to set themselves up for doctors. Though one of our dogmatizing philosophers may tell me, for instance, that this world has always existed, and is to last for ever : I will answer him, that this language is not that of Reason ; because, far from being supported or proved, it is contra-

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ry to all probability. Though another may pretend to persuade me by metaphysical arguments, that the soul is not spiritual; I will tell him that his metaphysics is a false and extravagant system. Should they affirm that the purest virtue has no other motive but self-interest: I would consider such an assertion as an abuse of sound morality. The testimony of that interior monitor that resides in the breast of every man, is sufficient to convince us of the folly and absurdity of those sophisms, which our pretended wits would fain impose on the world, and that most of these works called philosophical, are wholly destitute of philosophy, and contain nothing but extravagant doubts, chimerical and dangerous assertions, rash and false propositions, which are contradicted by Reason and experience: It is this inward testimony that confirms those first grand truths, which God has infused into the minds of all, and persuades us that there is nothing infallible and indubitable but what is from God, and consequently
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that it is a most criminal abuse of philosophy to employ it against the authority of that Religion, which God has been pleased to reveal to man.

Come, then, rashi and dangerous sophist, and renounce the title of philosopher, which ignorance and prejudice have bestowed upon thee, come and resume thy Reason ; be not ashamed to mix with that people, whom thou wert wont to despise and consider so far beneath thee, that very people, simple as they are, will teach thee to know thy origin and thy destiny, to adore a God and to pay him that homage and worship, which he himself has ordained. Yes, thou wilt hear from the mouth even, of a poor tradesman, what ought to be the object of thy researches, and what would insure thy real happiness. In vain dost thou affect a display of proud science, thy lights are, in truth, but darkness, and thy vanity the cause of thy ruin ; there is no true Christian, however, young or simple he may be, who is not a better philosopher.

philosopher than thou, and who has not sufficient motives to lament and despise thee.

Sublime Philosophy! how thou hast been disfigured by those pretended philosophers! in their hands, thou art but a perversion of Reason, a mere chimera, they have reduced thee to an empty sound of words destitute of meaning; for the unbelievers, being without principles and without experience, only know how to overturn and destroy. If they talk of changing the form of governments, and of abolishing the Christian Religion, they agree at the same time, that they do not see what they can substitute in their stead: what a concession! 'tis, as it were, the voice of Reason that makes itself heard even by the most unreasonable: a voice they cannot entirely stifle.

Shall we ever again have the satisfaction to see the return of those happy times, when a Malbranche shewed to
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the earth the real beauties of true philosophy? the world would now want a sage like him, to restore to the soul those goods of which unbelievers wish to strip her. The senses have so weakened and obscured our Reason, that we are no more than mere shadows of ourselves. The true sages pass for dotards, and mad-men for philosophers.

A writer, hurried away by an ardent imagination, suddenly takes up the pen and plunges headlong into the most extravagant errors, he publishes his reveries and visions with an inconceivable assurance, and, lo! he is cried up for a great man. His readers, either not understanding his language, or seduced by the singularity, or rather the excentricity of his ideas, are seized with a sort of enthusiasm and pronounce him a divine author: Some lady of refined taste, whose opinion is decisive, confirms this testimony; and from that moment, whoever presumes to think otherwise has neither taste nor genius.

It is thus the reputation of our modern Philosophers is formed and spread abroad. But let us leave them to enjoy their triumph, it can last but a moment ; death and posterity will soon avenge the wrongs of Christianity and the contempt in which it has been held ; the one by clearly making known the truth, the other by shuddering at the errors of mankind. If the pure elements of philosophy were universally adopted in our seminaries of learning, disengaged from all those futile questions and from all that jargon of the schools, which only serve to confuse the ideas, we might expect to see at length, the reign of sound Reason gradually restored. In the sciences, as well as in business, our principal object should be to simplify and to present things in their true light ; it is from the neglect of adopting this method, that a just manner of thinking is so rare. There is a tone of Reason in the world, which notwithstanding all our folly and caprice would make itself be heard, if we would but rightly attend to it. But mankind
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in general are blinded with prejudice, and influenced by the spirit of party. Alas ! what dreadful evils has not this unfortunate spirit produced ! how often, even in the very sanctuary itself, has it sown the seeds of discord among those, who should be the Ministers of Peace ! how often has it extinguished the flame of charity in those breasts, which should communicate it to others ! how often has it given rise to acrimony and disputes among divines, which tended more to destroy than to edify ! God forbid I should thereby mean to impeach that true apostolic zeal, which should be ever jealous of the real interests of Religion, I speak only of abuses, which, it must be owned, have been very great. It is the abuse of philosophy that fills our cities with such a swarm of obscene and impious productions : 'tis it engenders animosity, hatred and dissensions : 'tis it gives encouragement and rewards to writers, who deserve only censure : 'tis it extorts praise and applause in favour of the most indifferent, and frequently
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the most abandoned and dangerous characters: it is the abuse of philosophy that leaves the Christian Philosopher in obscurity, and declares Religion to be only a political invention or a mere chimaera: it is it, in fine, that attacks and insults the true worship, and degrades the dignity of man.

How much superior is the Reason of the simple peasant who adores his God, respects the laws, and peaceably enjoys the fruits of his labour, how far preferable to this vain science, that knows nothing but to contradict, to deny or to doubt. The language of Reason is often better understood in the shepherds cabin, than in the philosophers study. The one has but his soul and truth, which he can discover without any obstacle; the other on the contrary, with his head filled with paradoxes and hypotheses, is almost an entire stranger to himself and is incapable of knowing or distinguishing his own nature. Vainly then, do people affect to call this the
philosophic

philosophic age. If it is distinguished for some works of genius, how many are there that dishonour and degrade it ! our writers seem to take a pride in publishing all their reveries, and entertaining their reader with whatever affects or disturbs their imagination. Let us be men, and, notwithstanding this delirium, which seems so universally to pervade people of all ages and conditions, we will learn to think and speak as Reason teaches, but I mean, sound and unbiaſſed Reason, and not the ſuggeſtions of the paſſions, which are too often miſtaken for the language of Reason, and which are the ſource of all our miſfortunes.

O Reason ! thou noble and valuable faculty ! thou always reſideſt in me. Impoſe ſilence on my ſenſes and my paſſions, that I may be able to hear and to obey thee. There is no true philoſophy without thee ; thoſe who aſſume the name of philoſophers, do not even know thee. What ! though they ſleep in thy boſom, they do not even perceive thy exiſtence.

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How humiliating to walk with a torch in one's hand, and not to see ! such is our unhappy state. Make thyself known then, O precious Reason ! and thou wilt renew the earth, thou wilt revive that true taste and discernment, which have been almost lost, thou wilt establish thyself on the ruins of false wit, thou wilt rescue good sense from that obscure and debased state, in which it has hitherto been, and thou wilt render Philosophy the school of Morality and of Religion.

CHAPTER XIX.

ON THE LIMITS OF REASON.

REASON, were it not limited, must be the divinity itself. Every creature ought to carry with it the marks of its nothingness. The earth wears, the stars are eclipsed, men die, and the soul con-

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tinually feels its own weakness ; for he alone is infinite, who has created all.

These truths, though within the reach of every man, yet seem incomprehensible to the greater number. Some little minds raising themselves on the wings of presumption, vainly imagine that all should yield to their researches, that there is nothing inaccessible to their penetrating genius ; and what renders this conceit the more singular is, that, at the same time that they boast of being able to fathom and comprehend every thing, they declare themselves to be of the same nature with the brute. Their soul, which they suppose to be but a particle of matter, shall erect itself as judge of God and of his eternal decrees. What a wonderful particle this must be ! does it not comprise mysteries, much more difficult to be conceived than all those that faith proposes ?

But tell me then, proud Man ! didst thou really imagine, that the nature of
God

God could have nothing incomprehensible to thy weak Reason? or if thou didst not think so, how couldst thou presume to judge of matters of faith, and reject those ineffable dogmas, because they transcend thy comprehension? hast thou been able to scan all the ways of God, thou who dost vainly boast that, by becoming Deist, thou gettest rid of all mysteries and difficulties? canst thou explain to us the nature of this immensity without space, this eternity without beginning, this action and this repose of a Being, who changes every thing and remains himself unchangable, who is every where though he has neither parts nor extension, who performs all in us, without constraining our liberty? What then is this God, whose secrets and counsels thou pretendest to fathom? where was he before the formation of this universe, or how has he formed it? from what store has he drawn matter, or that thunder-bolt which perhaps is pointed at thee? already, I perceive thou art staggered, I see thee begin to hesitate, to

faulter, thou art quite bewildered in the horrors of thy nothingness. Thou knowest not the nature of the winds, nor the essence of fire, nor even of a single grain of sand. Thou knowest not what the little fly is, that buzzes in thy ears, nor the dog that fawns on thee; nay, thou knowest not the manner of thy existence nor thy own thoughts. Ah! rash Man, or rather, puny Philosopher! to what an alternative art thou reduced? either to acknowledge thyself a weak mortal, or a mad-man.

There is scarce an instant of our life that we may not easily perceive the limits of our Reason. Like this visible horizon that terminates our view, it presents to us a finite space. Ask that Philosopher, who constantly applies himself to discover the operations of nature, or that Professor of medicine, who is so attentive in watching the course of the animal spirits, and the circulation of the humours and of the blood, or that Metaphysician, who is so well skilled in distinguishing

tinguishing the wonders of the soul and its influence over the body ; unless they be infatuated men, or imposters, they will all acknowledge, that they cannot perceive either the causes or the secret springs that set this universe in motion ; they will confess, that we have here below only a light proportioned to our wants, and that when we attempt to penetrate too far, we are liable to fall into the most extravagant errors ; they will own that they meet insuperable obstacles every step they take, and that it is impossible to tear asunder that veil, which the Almighty has put between his designs and our perceptions ; in fine, they will agree, that whoever exceeds the limits which God himself has fixed, must be oppressed by the immense weight of his power.

The proud Man, like the rebel angel, has said in the arrogance of his mind, I will ascend the throne of wisdom, and will become like unto the most high. But what have these blasphemies produced ?

ed ? all the horrors and extravagance with which our modern writings are filled. The Almighty, jealous of the glory of his name, and of the incomprehensibility of his adorable ways, has confined our Reason within a circle which it cannot exceed : beyond that, all disputes should cease, nor ought we to reject a truth, because we cannot conceive it.

What confusion and disorder would prevail in the world, if the Creator were subject to be brought to an account by his creatures ! and if what is finite should insist on comprehending what is infinite ! each being acts according to the faculties it has received : man according to his reason, and the beast according to its instinct ; these two faculties, though different from each other, have their respective bounds. In vain does the Philosopher penetrate into the clouds, he finds as well as the simple shepherd, a barrier that stops his progress. It was not to the sea alone, but to each of us, that the Almighty gave
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this irrevocable order : *thus far shalt thou go and no farther*, here shall expire the pride of thy swollen waves. God has been pleased to give us sufficient capacity to know him and to love him, but not to comprehend him. He would be no longer what he is, if we could conceive his ineffable mysteries. Ah ! how can we be so presumptuous as to pretend to it, we who cannot even guess what passes in the interior of another man, nay, even of the smallest insect.

Our Reason subscribes to these truths ; for properly speaking, Reason never revolts ; in order to persuade us of the contrary, it would be necessary to prove, that light is darkness. In reality, Reason would then, cease to be what she is, she would act against herself, if her operations were to lead us into folly and error. If then, we do not abuse the faculties and the name of Reason, we must acknowledge, that people will always be ready to submit to revealed truths, when they act reasonably. God according to
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the expression of the scripture, has given up the world to the disputes of men, but he has reserved Religion as a sacred deposit, which we ought to admire and revere.

There can be nothing more capable of convincing us of this truth, than the reading of all the different works of genius, that are extant in the world. However profound, sublime and luminous they may be, they do not teach us either, to see into futurity, or to discover the cause of a thousand effects that we behold. If they demonstrate certain truths, which cannot be doubted, the object of these truths is not infinite. Thus, whether we reconcile all the antient and modern authors, or oppose them to each other, the only result of all their researches and observations will be a knowledge that is limited or purely ideal. All things, except God, have their boundaries, and all should pay homage to him, as the only infinite Being.

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But in order to prove our weakness, I ask no more than the sight of the vast ocean, when it swells, subsides, or opens its unfathomable abyss; or the view of the firmament, when in the midst of night, it displays all its riches. The soul astonished and bewildered, amidst such stupendous objects, endeavours to collect her Reason, and scarcely knows herself, or how she exists.

It is only by adhering to God, and by submitting to and adoring his impetrable decrees, that we are enabled to extend and enlarge our Reason. Otherwise, she remains groveling, even when she seems to soar, and her studies are but a science that *puffeth up* and teacheth nothing.

We cannot add a line to our stature, a drop of water to the sea, a leaf to the smallest plant, nor a wing to a little fly; and we pretend to sound the depths of infinite wisdom! Moreover, has not our Reason its beginning, its encrease and its

decay, and must it not consequently be weak, limited and dependent? a fever overturns it, a glass of wine disturbs it, a fright disconcerts it; at one time, the sport of the passions, at another, the victim of the senses; she is bewildered and confounded, and proves to us, that God alone is always the same, always eternal, always infinite, and is confined neither by limits nor duration.

It might, perhaps, be necessary here to point out the means of keeping Reason within her proper bounds, and of rendering her intelligible; but as rules of conduct are but seldom reduced to practice, it would probably be a superfluous undertaking. This much is certain, that retirement from the world, and the mortification of the senses restore the soul to herself, and leave us to enjoy the happy advantage of reflecting, and attending to the dictates of Reason; it is certain, that the idea of eternity ever present to the mind, brings us to a recollection of our nothingness, and frees us

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us from all ambition of aspiring to what is above our strength. You then, who are perhaps on the point of shaking off the yoke of Faith, and who imagine you hear the voice of Reason, in listening only to the clamour of the passions, stop and reflect seriously on the greatness of God, whose ways are as incomprehensible as himself; hearken to those inspirations, to those interior admonitions of your own conscience. This is the true Language of Reason: attend to it; and you will live like men conscious of their immortality.

END OF THE LANGUAGE OF REASON.

AN
EXTRACT
FROM THE
THOUGHTS OF MONS. PASCAL.

*AGAINST THE INDIFFERENCE OF ATHEISTS
AND FREE-THINKERS.*

LET those who impugn the Christian Religion, first learn what it is, before they make their attack. If this Religion boasted of seeing God clearly, and enjoying his presence without any veil of obscurity ; to object that there is nothing in this world which discovers him so evidently to us, would indeed, be directly levelling at the truth of her pretensions. But whereas Religion tells us, on the contrary, that we are here in a state of darkness,

ness, and separated from God, that he conceals himself from us, and that he calls himself in scripture, *Deus adfconditus*, the hidden God: in fine, if Religion endeavours equally to establish these two points:—that God has left in his Church sensible marks, whereby he may be known by those who seek him sincerely, but that they are, at the same time, so veiled, as to be discovered only by those who seek him with sincerity of heart: as long then, as they continue in this state of indifference and neglect (as they profess themselves to be) of seeking the truth; what does it avail them to say, that nothing discovers it to them? since this very obscurity, in which they remain, and which they object against the Church, only serves to establish one of those points which she maintains, and far from invalidating, supports and confirms her doctrine.

In order to attack Religion seriously, they should declare, that they have used all their endeavours to seek every where,
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and have examined even, all that the Church proposes, in order to clear up their doubts, but to no purpose. Were they to speak thus, I acknowledge, they would then indeed, challenge one of her pretensions. But, I trust, I shall be able to prove that no reasonable person can advance this assertion, and am even bold to say, that no one has ever affirmed it.

It is well known how persons of this disposition generally act. They think they have made great efforts to come at the truth, if they venture to spend a few hours in reading the Scripture, and ask a few questions of some Minister of Religion concerning matters of Faith. After that, they boast that they have inquired both of men and books for instruction, but in vain. I really, cannot help telling them, what I have often said, that this negligence is not to be borne with. There is not question here of the immaterial interest of a stranger : there is question of ourselves and of all that is most dear to us.

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The immortality of the soul is a matter of such weighty importance to us, and in which we are so deeply concerned, that a person who could remain indifferent about it, must be lost to all feeling. All our actions and our thoughts should take so different a bias, according to our belief or disbelief of another life, after this, of rewards and punishments, that it is impossible to advance one step with sense and judgment without regulating ourselves by a view to this great point, which ought to be our principal object and last end. Wherefore our most essential interest and first duty is to endeavour to acquire a clear knowledge of this important object, on which our whole conduct through life depends. And for this reason with respect to such as are not yet persuaded, I make a wide distinction between those, who earnestly seek for instruction, and those, who live without any concern, or even without bestowing a thought on a matter of such moment.

I cannot

I cannot but feel compassion for those, who are sincerely grieved to see themselves in this dreadful doubt, who consider it the greatest of misfortunes, and who sparing no pains to rid themselves of it, make it their principal and most serious study to investigate the truth. But for those senseless men, who pass their lives without ever thinking of this last and important end of life, and who merely, because they do not find in themselves sufficient light to persuade them, neglect seeking for it elsewhere and entering into a serious examination, whether this opinion of the immortality of the soul be one of those, which people are apt to embrace through credulous simplicity, or of those which, though obscure in themselves, have nevertheless a most solid foundation, I consider these men in a very different light. Such criminal neglect in an affair, in which they are so essentially interested, on which an eternity depends and in which their all is at stake, excites rather my indignation than pity, it really astonishes and terrifies

fies me, it appears to me as something monstrous. I do not exprefs myself thus, from a pious zeal of fpiritual devotion ; I maintain even, that felf-love, mere human intereft and the moft feeble light of Reafon are fufficient to infpire thefe fentiments.

We need not a very fublime and penetrating genius to difcover, that there is no real and folid fatisfaction this fide of the grave, that all our pleasures are but vanity, that our miferies are endlefs, that, in fine, death, which threatens us at each inftant, will place us in a few years, perhaps in a few days, in an eternal ftate of happinefs, of mifery, or of annihilation. Between us and Heaven, or Hell, or Annihilation there is then, nothing but life, which is the moft frail and precarious thing in the world ; and as Heaven cannot certainly be the lot of thofe, who doubt of the immortality of the foul, they, of courfe, have nothing to expect but hell or annihilation.

There

There is nothing more real, nor, at the same time, more terrible than this : Let us affect, as much as we please, to act the bravado, here is the end that awaits the most brilliant life. In vain does the unbeliever distract his thoughts from the consideration of eternity, as if he could annihilate it by not thinking of it, it still subsists in spite of him, and death, which in a short time is to open this awful scene, will reduce him to the dire necessity of being either eternally annihilated or eternally miserable.

Behold here is a doubt of a most serious and alarming consequence, and surely, the entertaining alone of such a doubt is a very great misfortune ; but should a person happen to be so unfortunate, it is at least his indispensable duty to endeavour by every means to remove it ; therefore he who doubts and remains indifferent in that state, is not only most unfortunate, but also guilty of the greatest injustice. But should he moreover, remain quiet and contented in this unhappy

happy state, should he make open profession and boast of it, should he even, make it the subject of his joy and his vanity ; I cannot find terms to describe so insensible and extravagant a being. Whence can such sentiments proceed ? what subject of joy can it be, to hear only of misery without resource ? What subject of vanity, to find oneself plunged into impenetrable obscurity ? what consolation, never to expect comfort ?

This fatal repose in such a deplorable ignorance is a thing so monstrous, that we must endeavour to expose the extravagance and stupidity of it to those, who are so unfortunate as to spend their lives in this careless manner, by representing to them what passes in their own interior, in order to confound them by making them sensible of their own weakness and folly. Behold how these men reason, when they determine to live in a total ignorance of what they are, and of what is to become of them hereafter without
ever

ever giving themselves any trouble to remove their doubts.

I know not, who has placed me in this world, nor what this world is, nor what I am myself. I am utterly ignorant of all things. I know not the nature of my body, of my senses, nor of my soul ; and even this portion of me that thinks what I utter, and that reflects on every thing and on itself, is equally ignorant of its own nature, as of the rest. I behold these frightful spaces of the universe in which I am inclosed ; I find myself confined to a corner of this vast extent, and know not why I am placed on this spot, rather than another, nor why this short span of life, which has been allotted me, has been assigned rather to this point than any other of eternity : I see myself swallowed up in those infinite spaces, that surround me on all sides, like an atom, or a shadow, that lasts but a moment and never returns. All that I know is, that I must shortly die ; but
what

what this death is, which I cannot avoid, is that which I am most ignorant of.

As I know not whence I came, neither do I know whither I am to go ; I only know, that on going out of this world, I fall, for ever, either into annihilation, or into the hands of an incensed God, but know not which of these two conditions is to be my doom for eternity.

Such is my state of wretchedness, weakness and obscurity : and from all this I conclude, that I ought, then, to pass all the days of my life, without considering what is to become of me hereafter, and that I have only to indulge my inclinations without reflection or uneasiness, doing every thing that must plunge me into eternal misery, in case what they say of it, be true. I might, perhaps, find out some means of eclairecising my doubts, but do not wish to take that trouble, and treating with contempt those, who give themselves any concern about it, I will go on without forecast or dread,

dread, to try the issue of so eventful a matter, and quietly face death, in this fatal uncertainty of the eternity of my future state.

It is indeed glorious to Religion to have such senseless men for her enemies, and their opposition, far from being dangerous, serves, on the contrary, to confirm the principal truths which she teaches; for the chief object of the Catholic Faith is to establish these two points, to wit, the corruption of our nature, and our redemption through Jesus Christ. Now if the Infidel does not serve to prove the truth of the redemption by the purity of his morals and the sanctity of his life, he serves at least, to shew in a very striking manner the corruption of human nature by such unnatural sentiments.

There is nothing so important to man as his present and future state; there is nothing he ought to dread so much as eternity. That men should be found,
then,

then, so indifferent to the loss of their being, and to the danger of being eternally miserable, is wholly repugnant to nature. They act in a very different manner with respect to all other matters : they apprehend, they foresee, they sensibly feel the most trifling incidents, and this very man who passes whole nights and days in rage and despair for the loss of a place, or for some imaginary offence or a mere point of honour, knows that he must forfeit all at death, and notwithstanding he gives himself no concern, trouble or uneasiness. This strange insensibility with respect to matters of the most serious and dreadful consequence in a heart that is so sensible to things the most trivial, is really monstrous ; it is a kind of enchantment wholly incomprehensible, a supernatural lethargy.

It is contrary to nature to suppose, that a man confined in a dungeon, who knows not whether his sentence is passed, and has but one hour to procure this information, and that hour sufficient to have

have his sentence reversed, in case it were passed, should spend that very hour in gaming or diverting himself, instead of enquiring about his sentence. Such is the condition of the Infidel, only with this difference, that the evils, with which he is threatened, are of infinitely greater consequence than the mere loss of life, or the momentary punishment that this prisoner might apprehend. Yet he runs on headlong and plunges himself into the precipice, putting as it were a bandage over his eyes, to prevent him from seeing the danger, and laughs at those who warn him against it.

Thus the truth of the Christian Religion is proved, not only by the zeal and attention of those, who seek God, but also by the blindness of those, who never think of him, and who pass their whole life in this fatal neglect of their eternal welfare. There must indeed be a strange revolution in the nature of man, to live in such a state, and still more, to make a boast of it. For though he were abso-

lutely, certain, that he had nothing to dread after death but Annihilation, would not even that be rather a subject of grief and despair than of vain boasting? but having no degree of certainty, must it not be the most inconceivable folly to glory in this doubt? and yet, so depraved is the human heart as to be capable even of rejoicing at this. This brutal kind of repose between the apprehension of Hell and Annihilation seems to have such charms, that not only those who are so unfortunate as actually to doubt of a future state, but even, many who entertain no such doubt, take a pride in affecting it. For, experience shews, that by much the greater part are of this latter description, that they are persons who assume a counterfeit character; and who are not really such as they wish to appear; they have heard that the fashionable manners of the world consist in thus acting the libertine or free-thinker; this is what they call—shaking off the yoke; and the principal motive which induces the most of them to give into such extravagance

vagance is, merely, the desire of imitating others.

A very moderate share of common sense would be sufficient to convince them how grossly they deceive themselves, in seeking thus to gain esteem. This is not the way to acquire it, I say even among those people of the world, who form a right judgment of things, and are sensible, that the only means of succeeding in this life is, at least, to appear virtuous, faithful, wise and capable of rendering useful services to one's friends; for men naturally love only what can be serviceable and useful to them: Now what advantage can it be to us, to hear a person say, that he has shaken off the yoke, that he does not believe there is a God who watches over our actions, that he considers himself as sole master of his own conduct and accountable to himself alone? does he think, thereby, to engage us henceforth, to place much confidence in him, or to expect from him consolation, advice and succour in our distress? does

does he think to afford us great joy in telling us, he doubts whether his soul be any thing more than a little wind or smoke, and telling it, even, with an air of confidence and self-complacency? are these, then, tidings to be announced as a subject of rejoicing? or rather, should they not be mentioned, on the contrary, with the greatest sorrow and regret? did they but seriously reflect, they would find that their conduct, far from being approved of, is so universally disliked, so repugnant to reason, so opposite to propriety and decorum and so far from gaining them the admiration and applause they seek to obtain, that nothing, on the contrary, is more likely to draw on them the contempt and aversion of mankind, and to prove their want of sense and judgment. In fact, if you call them to an account and ask them to give their reasons for doubting of Religion, their objections are so weak and futile, that they would rather persuade you of the contrary. This is what a person, very justly, replied to them one day—if you
 continue

continue to argue in this manner, said he, you will really convert me. And he certainly said right ; for who would not be shocked at the idea of adopting the sentiments of men of such despicable and mean abilities ? Wherefore those, who only affect such sentiments, are truly unfortunate, in forcing their natural disposition, in order to become the most extravagant and impertinent of Men.

If they are sincerely sorry from their hearts, for not being more enlightened, let them candidly acknowledge it ; such a declaration is not shameful ; the only thing we should be ashamed of, is the want of Shame. Nothing discovers more clearly a strange weakness of mind than not to know, how great a misfortune it is for a man, to be without God ; there can be no greater proof of an extreme baseness and perversion of heart than not to wish the truth of the eternal promises ; there is nothing more cowardly than to brave the Almighty. Let them, then, leave such impiety to those, who are so

base and perverse as to be really capable of it ; let them, at least, be honest men, if they cannot as yet be Christians ; let them acknowledge, in fine, that there are but two descriptions of persons, who can be called reasonable, to wit, those who serve God with their whole hearts, because they know him ; or those who seek him with their whole hearts, because they have not yet the happiness to know him.

For such then, as earnestly seek God, and acknowledging their misery, sincerely desire to be freed from it, we consider it our duty to labour in assisting them to discover that light which, as yet, is hidden from them. But for those who live without knowing God, or seeking to know him, they seem to judge themselves so little deserving their own care and attention, that they are, surely, unworthy the care and attention of others, and one must be possessed of all the Charity of that Religion, which they despise,

not

not to hold them in such contempt as to abandon them to their extravagant folly. However, as this Religion obliges us, as long as God is pleased to spare them in this life, to consider them as capable of the grace of God, which can enlighten them, and to believe, that they may, in a short time, be more firmly established in the faith than ourselves, and that we, on the contrary, may fall into that deplorable state of blindness in which they now are ; we should therefore do for them, what we should wish to have done for ourselves, were we in their situation ; we should earnestly entreat them to take pity on themselves and to advance some steps, at least, to try if they can discover a ray of the Divine Light. Let them devote to the reading of this book a few of those hours, which they waste in trifling amusements ; if they apply themselves to the perusal of it with a true and sincere desire of knowing the truth, I trust, the satisfaction they will feel in reading it,

it, will amply compensate their trouble, and that they will be induced thereby to acknowledge the evidence of our Divine Religion and the inestimable advantages it procures us.

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